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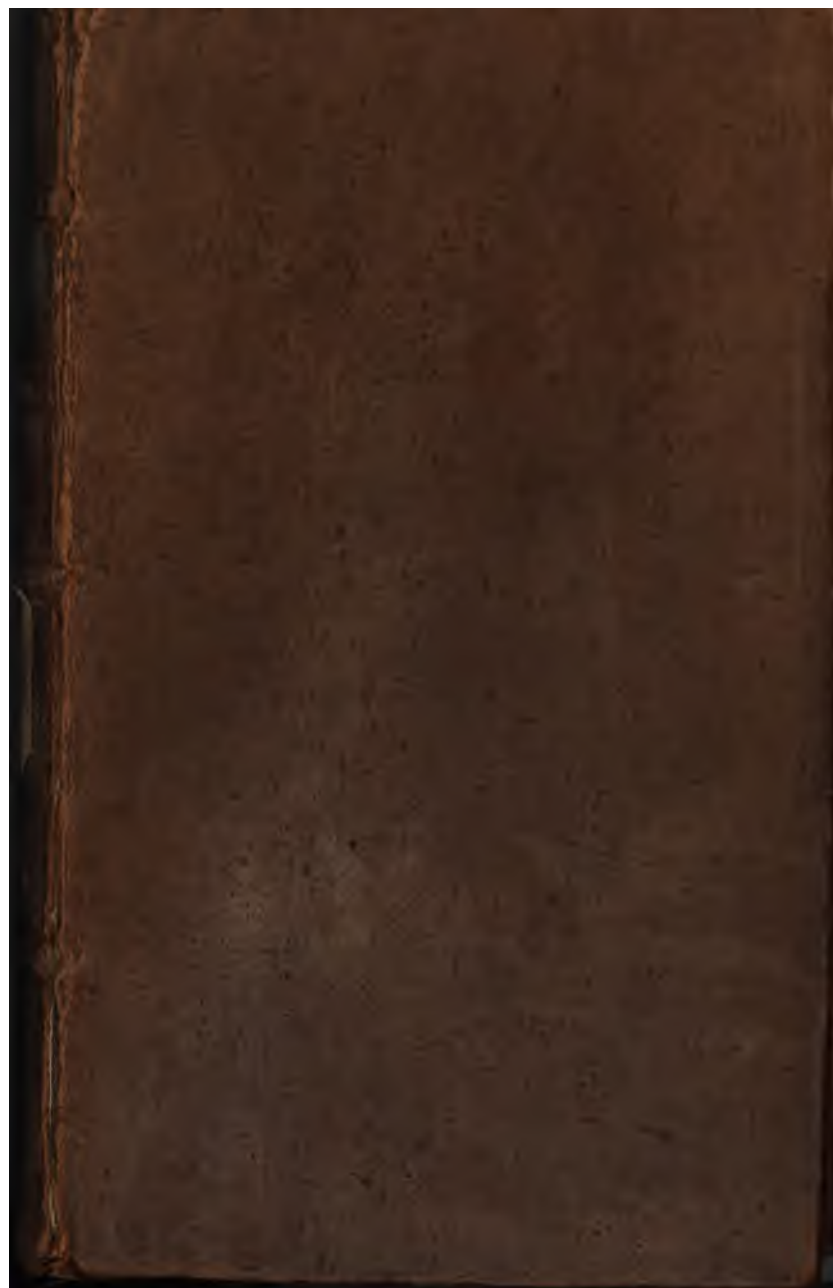
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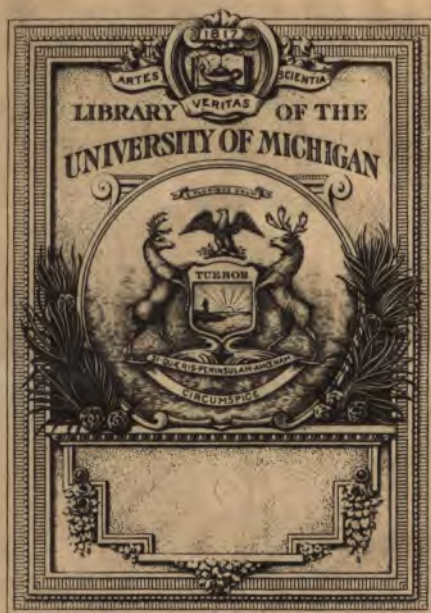


Francis Longe
SPIXWORTH PARK.
NORFOLK.

828

H427

1768







Haywood, Mrs. Anna

THE

HISTORY

OF

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

VOL. II.

THE FOURTH EDITION.



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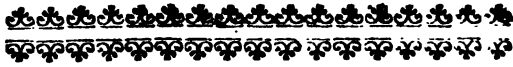
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C O N T E N T S

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SECOND VOLUME.

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THE
HISTORY
OF
MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

CHAP. I.

*Will satisfy the reader's curiosity in some points,
and increase it in others.*



THOUGH Mr. Goodman under whose care, and in whose house Miss Betsy had been for upwards of a year, knew much more of that young lady's humour and disposition than Mr. Chatfree, who saw her but seldom, could possibly do, and could not be brought to think as he did, that the merits of Mr. Trueworth had

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made any effectual impression on her heart; yet he imagined, that to propagate such an opinion to Mr. Staple would conduce very much to persuade him to break off his courtship, which was a thing very much desired by Mr. Goodman, as he was certain the continuance of it be would attended with almost insurmountable difficulties, and create many vexations and disputes, when Mr. Brancis Thoughtless came to town.

The two old gentlemen went on together, discoursing on this affair, 'till they came to the lodgings of Mr. Staple, where they found him sitting in an easy chair, leaning on a table, with papers and a standish before him; — they perceived he had been writing, for the pen was not out of his hand when they entered the room: he threw it down, however, as soon as he saw them, and rose to receive them with a great deal of politeness, though accompanied with an air, which, in spite of his endeavours to conceal it, discovered he laboured under an extraordinary dejection of spirits.

“I am glad, (said Mr. Chatfree, pointing to the pen) to see you are able to make use of that weapon, as I feared your arm had been too much prejudiced
“by

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 3

“ by another.” — “ I have found some difficulty, indeed, in doing it replied the wounded gentleman ; but something which seemed to me a case of necessity, obliged me to exert my utmost efforts for that purpose.”

After the first civilities were over, and they were all seated, Mr. Goodman, and Mr. Chatfree began to open the business upon which they came ; — Mr. Goodman represented to him in the most pathetic terms, the deep concern he had been in, for having ever encouraged his addressee to Miss Betsy, and excused himself for having done so, by his ignorance, at that time, that Mr. Truworth had been previously recommended by her brother : — he then gave him some hints, that the civilities Miss Betsy had treated him with, he feared, were rather owing to that little vanity, which is generally the companion of youth and beauty, than to that real regard, which his passion and person merited from her, and said, he heartily wished to see him withdraw his affections from an object, where he could not now flatter him with the least hope of a suitable return.

“ No, no, (cried Mr. Chatfree, interrupting him hastily) you may take my word, *she is as much in love, as a girl*”

B 2

“ of

4 THE HISTORY OF

“ of her temper can be with Mr. Trueworth, and I do not doubt but you will all see the effects of it as soon as her brother comes to town.” — Mr. Goodman on this, took an opportunity of telling Mr. Staple, that the ascendant that young gentleman had over his sister, and the zeal he expressed for the interest of his friend, would certainly go a great way in determining the point; and added, that if it were true, as his friend suggested, that she had really an inclination for Mr. Trueworth, she would then avow it, and make a merit of it to her brother, as if done merely in regard to him.

Many other arguments were urged by these two gentlemen, in order to convince Mr. Staple of the little probability there was of succeeding with Miss Betsy; all which he listened to attentively, never interrupting what either of them said, till perceiving they had ended all they had to offer on the subject, he made them this reply :

“ Gentlemen, said he, I am infinitely obliged to you both for this visit, and the friendly purpose of it, which, I perceive, was to give me that advice, which you might reasonably think I wanted. — I have heard, and I believe
“ have

" have not lost one word, at least, I am
 " sure no part of the meaning of what
 " you have delivered: — I own there is
 " great justice in every thing you have al-
 " ledged, and am pleased to think the ar-
 " guments you bring are such, as, before
 " your coming here, I had myself brought
 " against the folly of my own unhappy
 " passion for Miss Betsy, but, gentlemen,
 " it is not that I am capable of being de-
 " terred from prosecuting it, by any thing
 " I might have to apprehend, either by
 " her own inclinations or her brother's
 " persuasions, but for other reasons, which
 " at present, perhaps, you may be ignorant
 " of, yet are such, as to conceal I should
 " but half be just. — Be pleased, sir,"
 continued he, addressing himself to Mr.
 Goodman, and giving him a paper, " to
 " read that letter, and see what my reso-
 " lutions are, and the motives I have for
 " them."

Mr. Goodman was beginning to look
 over the paper, but Mr. Staple requested
 he would read it aloud, as he desired that
 Mr. Chatfree should be partaker of the
 contents, on which he read, with an au-
 dible voice, these lines:

THE HISTORY OF

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

" SIR,

" WHEN I propos'd the decision
" of our fate by force of arms, I offer'd
" at the same time, that the glory of
" serving Miss Betsy should be the victor's
" triumph. — This your too great mo-
" desty declined; — but, sir, though
" you scorn'd to accept the advantage
" your superior skill acquired, your ge-
" nerosity, in spite of you, has gain'd.
" — I love Miss Betsy, and would have
" maintained my claim against all who
" should have dared to dispute her with
" me, while justice and while honour
" permitted me to do so; but though
" I am unfortunate, I never can be base.
" — My life, worthless as it is, has twice
" been in your power, and I should be
" no less hateful to myself, than con-
" temptible to the world, should I offer
" to interrupt the peace of him that gave
" it. — May you be as successful in love
" as you have been in fight, and the
" amiable object be convinced of her own
" happiness in making yours. — I desist
" for ever from the vain hopes I once
" was flattered with, and the first wish
" my soul now harbours, is to be worthy
" the

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 7

“ the title of your friend, as I am bound
“ to avow myself,

“ With the greatest sincerity,

“ S-I-R,

“ Your most obliged,

“ And most humble servant,

“ T. STAPLE.”

“ Nothing,” said Mr. Goodman, as
soon as he had done reading “ can equal
“ your generosity in forming this reso-
“ lution, but the wisdom in persisting in
“ it; and if I find you do so, shall have
“ more reason to congratulate you upon
“ it, than I should think I had on the
“ success of your wishes in marrying
“ Miss Betsy.

“ I should laugh now, cried Mr. Chat-
“ free, if Mr. Truworth, in a fit of ge-
“ nerosity too, should also take it into
“ his head to resign his pretensions, and
“ choose to wear the willow instead of
“ the myrtle garland, because you do
“ so.” — “ He has already proved his ge-
“ nerosity,” replied Mr. Staple with a
sigh, which he was unable to restrain,
“ and has no need to give the severe testi-

“mony you mention, if he is so happy
 “as you seem to think he is;—but, con-
 “tinued he, it is not my business to exa-
 “mine who yields, or who pursues Miss
 “Betty. — I am fixed in my determina-
 “tion of seeing her no more, and as soon
 “as I am recovered from the hurts I have
 “received on her account, will go into the
 “country, and seek a cure in absence for
 “my unavailing passion.

Neither Mr. Goodman nor Mr. Chat-
 free were so old, as to have forgot how
 hard it is for a youthful heart to give up
 its darling wishes, and sacrifice desire to
 discretion.—They said abundance of hand-
 some things, omitted nothing which they
 imagined might add to the fortitude of his
 present way of thinking. He, on the
 other hand, to take from them all remains
 of doubt concerning the sincerity of his
 intentions, sealed the letter he had wrote
 to Mr. Trueworth, and sent it to that gen-
 tleman, while they were in the room.

Mr. Goodman was extremely pleased
 in his mind, that an affair, which, for
 some time past, had given him a good
 deal of anxiety, was in so fair a way of
 being ended without further mischief:—
 he took no notice, however, on his re-
 turn home, at least not before Miss Betty,

of

of the visit he had been making, or that he knew any thing more of Mr. Staple, than what she had been told herself by Mr. Chatfree.

In the mean time, this young lady affected to appear more grave than ordinary : — I say, affected to be so ; for as she had been at first shocked by Mr. Chatfree's report, and afterwards teized by his railery, and then reprimanded, on the score of her conduct by Mr. Goodman, she was not displeased in her heart at the dangerous proof, which the two lovers had given of their passion.

She lost, however, great part of the satisfaction this adventure might have afforded her, for want of a proper person to whom she might have talked freely on it. — She had, indeed, many acquaintance, in some of whom she, doubtless, might have confided ; but she did not choose to be herself the reporter of this story to any one, who had not heard of it from other hands ; and Miss Flora, who knew the whole, and was her companion and bed-fellow, was grown of late so sullen and peevish, as not to be capable of either giving or receiving any diversion in discourses of that nature.

It is certain, that there never was a more astonishing alteration in the temper of any one person in so short a time, than in that of Miss Flora : — her once gay and spirituous behaviour, which, without being a beauty, rendered her extremely agreeable, was now become all dull and gloomy. — Instead of being fond of a great deal of company, she now rather chose to avoid than court the society of any one ; — she said but little, and when she spoke, it was only to contradict whatever she heard alledged by others : — a heavy melancholy, mixed with an ill-natured frown, perpetually loured upon her brow : — in fine, if she had been a little older, she might have sat for the picture of Envy. — Miss Betsey, by being most with her, felt most the effects of her bad humour ; but as she thought she could easily account for it, the sweetness of her disposition made her rather pity than resent the change.

A young linnen-draper, of whom Lady Mellasin sometimes bought things, had taken a great fancy to Miss Flora, and not doubting but she had a fortune in some measure answerable to the appearance she made, got a friend to intercede with Lady Mellasin, for leave to pay his respects to her

her daughter: — this being granted, he made several visits to the house, and was very well received by Miss Flora herself, as well as by those who had the disposal of her, 'till coming on the topic of fortune, Mr. Goodman plainly told him, that having many relations of his own to provide for, the most he could spare to Miss Flora was five hundred pounds. — The draper's passion was very much damped, on hearing his mistress's portion was like to be so small; — he told Mr. Goodman, that though he was very much charmed with the person and behaviour of the young lady, and should be proud of the honour of an alliance with such a family, yet as he was a young man, and but lately set up for himself, he wanted money to throw into trade, and could not think of marrying without more than three times the sum offer'd: — he added, that a young lady of her birth, and bringing up, would expect to live as she had been accusom'd; which he could no way promise she should do, without a fortune sufficient to defray the expence.

Mr. Goodman thought the reasons he gave were very just, and as he was unwilling to stretch his hand any farther than he had said, and was too honest to *promise more than he intended to per-*

form, replied with the same freedom that the other had spoke, that in truth he did not think Flora would make a fit wife for a tradesman: — that the girl was young enough, not ugly, and it was his opinion that she should wait 'till a more suitable match should offer. In a word, Mr. Goodman's answer put a final stop to the courtship, and though Miss Flora affected to disdain the mercenary views, as she term'd them, of the draper, and never spoke of him but with the utmost contempt, yet her melancholy coming on soon after he had desisted his addresses, made Miss Betsey think she had reason to impute it to no other cause; and therefore in mere compassion to this imaginary mortification, was so far from retorting any of those little taunts, and malicious inuendo's, with which she was continually treated by the other, that she took all the pains she could to alleviate the vexation she saw her in, and sooth her into a better humour.

The reader will probably think as Miss Betsey did; but the falsity of this conjecture, and the cruel return the good-nature of that young lady met with, will in due time and place appear.

CHAP.



CHAP. II.

*Contains some passages, which, perhaps, may be
looked upon as pretty extraordinary.*

ACCORDING to the common rule of honour among gentlemen, Mr. Truworth had certainly behaved so, as not to have either that, or his good-nature, call'd in question; but this was not enough to satisfy him: — he could not be easy under the reflection, that the obligations he had conferred gave a painful gratitude to the receiver.

He was deeply affected with Mr. Staple's letter: — he doubted not but that gentleman, in forcing himself to resign his pretensions to Miss Betsy, must suffer the extremest agonies; and heartily commiserating a case, which, had fortune so decreed, might have been his own, immediately wrote to him in the following terms:

To

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TO T. STAPLE, ESQ.

“ S I R,

“ I AM ashamed to find the little I
“ have done so much over-rated by a
“ person, who, I am certain, is capable of
“ the greatest things; but should be in-
“ volved in more confusion still, should
“ any consideration of me, or my hap-
“ piness, prevail on you to become an
“ enemy to your own. — I am altogether
“ unacquainted with what kind of senti-
“ ments either of us is regarded by the
“ fair object of our mutual wishes. — It
“ is highly probable her young heart may,
“ as yet, be quite insensible of those we
“ have endeavoured to inspire it with;
“ —for my own part, as I have yet no
“ reason to despair, so I have had also
“ but little room for hope. — You, sir,
“ have an equal chance, for any thing I
“ know, or can boast of to the contrary;
“ and as you saw I refused to hazard my
“ pretensions on the point of the sword,
“ neither justice, nor honour, requires
“ you should forfeit yours, though an
“ accident gave me the advantage of you
“ in the field.’ —Tis by Miss Betsy her-
“ self our fate is to be judged. —’Tis yet
“ a moot point whether either will suc-
“ ceed in the attempt of pleasing her.

“ W.

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 15

“ We may, perhaps, contend for an airy
“ expectation, while another, more fortunate
“ shall bear away the prize from
“ both; but if one of us is decreed to be
“ the happy man, on which soever the lot
“ shall fall, he ought not to incur the
“ hatred of the other.

“ I gladly embrace the offer of your
“ friendship, and whatever is the fortune
“ of our love, should in that, as in
“ all other events, endeavour to prove,
“ that I am,

“ With an equal sincerity,

“ S I R,

“ Your very much obliged,

“ And most humble servant,

“ C. TRUEWORTH.”

Mr. Staple read this letter many times over, but received not all the satisfaction which the author intended it should give him; although he acknowledged the generosity of his rival, yet he could not conceive there was a possibility for a man in love to be easy under the addresses of another, without knowing himself secure of not being prejudiced by them : — he there-

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therefore concluded that Mr. Chatfree was right in his conjecture, and that Miss Betsey only waited for her brother's coming to town to declare in favour of Mr. Truworth.

This gentleman had a great share of spirit, and some pride, and these making him disdain to pursue a fruitless aim, and suffering himself to be publicly overcome by Mr. Truworth in love, as he had been in fight, very much contributed to enable him to keep that resolution he had formed in the presence of Mr. Goodman and Mr. Chatfree.

He answered Mr. Truworth's letter, however, with the utmost complaisance, but without letting him know any part of his intentions, in relation to Miss Betsey, fearing lest any farther contest on this affair might draw from that gentleman fresh proofs of a generosity, to which already he looked upon himself as too much obliged.

Miss Betsey little suspecting what had passed between her two lovers, since their meeting in the Green-Park, received Mr. Truworth, when he came to visit her the same day, as usual, with a great deal of good-humour. She took not any notice

tice that she had heard of the duel, imagining that he would himself inform her of it, and he not thinking it would become him to do so, as having had the advantage of his rival, 'tis probable there would have been no mention made of it, if Lady Mellafin had not come into the room, and told him, that she would not have broke in upon his conversation with Miss Betsy, if it had been possible for her to have resisted the pleasure of congratulating him, not only on his safety, but also on his coming off victor in the field of battle.

The modesty of Mr. Truworth would not suffer him to hear these last words without blushing; but soon recovering himself, "Fortune, madam, answered he, "is not always the most favourable to "the most deserving:—her partial smiles "will never make me vain, or happy, "unless, continued he, looking tenderly "on Miss Betsy, she would add to her "indulgence here, and give me room "to hope my services to this lady might "one day be crowned with the same "success, as she this morning gave my "sword." — "The one, said Miss "Betsy, smiling, has nothing to do with "the other, and I do not know how to "think a man, who really wishes nothing

"so

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“ much as to appear agreeable in the
“ eyes of his mistress, would run the
“ hazard of making the contemptible
“ figure of a culprit at the bar of a court
“ of judicature.”

They then fell into some discourse on duelling, and Mr. Trueworth could not help joining with the ladies, in condemning the folly of that custom, which, contrary to the known laws of the land, and oftentimes contrary to his own reason too, obliges the gentleman either to obey the call of the person who challenges him to the field, or, by refusing, submit himself not only to all the insults his adversary is pleased to treat him with, but also to be branded with the infamous character of a coward, by all that know him.

Nothing material enough to be related; happened in this visit, except that Miss Flora, who had been abroad when Mr. Trueworth came, and returned home a small time before he went away, talked much more in half an hour, than she had done for some whole days past; but it was in so cold a manner, sometimes praising, sometimes blaming his conduct, in regard to the transactions of that morning, that he could not well determine in his mind, whether

whether she was a friend or an enemy to the success of his passion.—Miss Betsy herself was a little surprised, but nothing relating to that young lady dwelt much upon her mind, as she really thought she had no design in any thing she said or did.—The behaviour of Mr. Staple ran much more in her head: she knew he was pretty much wounded, and therefore might suppose him unable to wait on her in person, but having expected he would send his compliments to her, either by letter or message, and finding he did neither the whole day, it seemed to her a thing too strange to be accounted for: she was, however, eased of the suspense she was in, on that score, by receiving from him, as she was at breakfast the next morning, the following epistle:

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

MADAM,

“ A BROTHER’S recommendation, superior merit, and your own inclination, have all united to plead my rival’s cause, and gain the verdict against unhappy me! — I ought more early to have seen the vanity of attempting to succeed, where Mr. Trueworth was the candidate; yet hurried by the violence of my passion, I rushed into an action, which,

“ which, by adding to his glory, has
 “ shewn my demerits in a more conspicu-
 “ ous light than ever.

“ It would be needless to repeat what
 “ happened yesterday; I cannot doubt,
 “ madam, but you are well acquainted
 “ with all the particulars of my folly,
 “ and the just punishment it met with.
 “ — I have only to say, the generosity of
 “ my rival, and my conqueror, has re-
 “ stored me to my lost reason, and con-
 “ vinced me, that whatever preference he
 “ may be so happy as to have gained in
 “ your esteem, he is indebted for it to the
 “ excellence of your good sense, and not
 “ to that partial fancy, which frequently
 “ misguides the choice of persons of your
 “ sex and age.

“ I would have waited on you in per-
 “ son to take my everlasting leave, but
 “ I am not certain how far I ought to
 “ depend on the strength of my resolu-
 “ tion in your presence. — Permit, there-
 “ fore, my pen to do that which my
 “ tongue would falter in performing.
 “ — Yes, madam, I must forego, re-
 “ nounce for ever those glorious expecta-
 “ tions with which so lately I flattered
 “ my fond heart; — henceforth must
 “ think on you as the fallen father of
 “ man-

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 22

“ mankind did on the tree of life : —
“ the merits of my too accomplished ri-
“ val are the flaming swords which drive
“ me from my once hoped-for paradise ;
“ and while I mourn my unhappy fate,
“ compels me to own it to be just. —
“ Farewell, O most amiable of your sex !
“ Farewell, for ever ! — I have troubled
“ you too long, and have no excuse to
“ make, but that it is the last you will re-
“ ceive from me. — May the blest guar-
“ dians of the fair and good be your con-
“ stant directors, and shield you from all
“ ills. — Be assured that ’till I cease to
“ exist, I shall not cease to be,

“ With the sincerest good wishes,

“ MADAM,

“ Your most faithful,

“ Though unfortunate, humble servant,

“ T. STAPLE.”

Miss Betsy was astonished to that de-
gree; on reading so unexpected a declara-
tion, that she could scarce believe she was
awake for some moments, and thought it
all a dream : — she broke off, and made
several pauses in the reading, crying out,

“ Good

“ Good God! — It is impossible! — What
 “ does the man mean? — How came
 “ such stuff into his head? — He is mad,
 “ sure!”

Mr. Goodman, who had some notion
 of what had put her into this ferment,
 and was willing to be more confirmed,
 asked her in a pleasant way, what had
 occasioned it? — “ Indeed, sir, replied
 Miss Betty, endeavouring to compose her-
 self, “ I have been so confounded; that
 “ I knew not where I was, or who was
 “ in the room. — I ask your pardon, —
 “ but this, I hope, will plead my excuse,
 “ continued she, throwing the letter on
 “ the table, your friend has given over
 “ his suit to me, which I am very glad
 “ of; but the motives, which he pre-
 “ tends obliges him to it, are so odd
 “ and capricious, as not to be accounted
 “ for.”

“ Given over his suit, cried Lady Mel-
 “ lasin, hastily! — Oh! pray, let us hear
 “ on what pretence?” — On which
 Mr. Goodman read the letter aloud, the
 very repetition of which renewed Miss
 Betty's agitations. “ He has acted, said Mr.
 Goodman, as soon as he had done read-
 ing, “ like a man of sense and resolution,
 “ and I see no cause why you should be
 “ discon-

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“disconcerted at the loss of a lover,
 “whose pretensions you did not design
 “to favour.” — “He was very hasty,
 “however, cried Miss Betsy, scornfully,
 “in concluding for me. — What did the
 “man think I was to be won at once?
 “Did he imagine his merits were so ex-
 “traordinary, that there required no more
 “to obtain, than barely to ask? but I
 “give myself no concern on that score,
 “I assure you, sir: — it is the info-
 “lence of his accusing me of being in
 “love that vexes me. — Who told him
 “I wonder! — or, how came such a
 “thing into his head, that Mr. True-
 “worth had the preference in my esteem?
 “— By the manner in which he speaks
 “of him in this letter, he has found
 “more perfections in him, than ever I
 “did, and would make one think he
 “were himself enamoured of his rival’s
 “merits.”

In answer to all this, he told her with
 a serious air, that Mr. Staple was bound
 by all those ties, which engage a noble
 mind, to act in the manner he had done;
 —that he had been twice indebted to Mr.
 Truworth for his life, and that the
 whole behaviour of that gentleman to-
 wards him, both during the combat, and
 after

after it was over demanded all the returns that gratitude could pay.

He afterwards run into a detail of all the particulars of what had passed between the two rivals, many of which the ladies were ignorant of before — Lady Mellasin joined with her husband, in extolling the greatness of soul, which Mr. Truworth had shewn on this occasion: but Miss Flora said little, and what she did was rather in praise of Mr. Staple. — “ Mr. “ Truworth, cried she, is a fine gentle- “ man enough; but has done no more “ than what any man of honour would “ do; and, for my part, I think that Mr. “ Staple, in putting the self denial he has “ now shewn in practice, discovers more “ of the hero and philosopher, than the “ other has done.”

The conversation on this topic lasted some time, and probably would not have broke off so soon, if it had not been interrupted by two young ladies coming in to ask Miss Betsy and Miss Flora if they were not for the Park that morning? To which they having agreed, and promised to call on them in their way, went up into their chamber, in order to prepare themselves for the walk proposed.



C H A P. III.

Discovers to Miss Betsy a piece of treachery she little expected to hear of.

MISS Flora, who had been deterred from saying all she had a mind to do, on the affair between Miss Betsy's two lovers, now took this opportunity of giving her tongue all the latitude it wanted. They were no sooner come into the chamber, than, "Lord, my dear," cried she, with a tone vastly different from that in which she had spoke to her of late, "how vexed am I for you! — It will certainly go all about the town, that you are in love with Truworth, and there will be such cabals, and such whispering about it, that you will be plagued to death:—I could tear him to pieces, methinks; for I am sure he is a vain fellow, and the hint must come first from himself."

"I never saw any thing like vanity in him, replied Miss Betsy, and I am rather inclined to believe Mr. Staple got the notion from the idle rattle of
VOL. II. C "Mr.

“ Mr. Chatfree.”—Mr. Chatfree, said Miss
“ Flora, thought of no such thing himself,
“ ’till he had been at the tavern with Mr.
“ Trueworth; but if I was in your place,
“ I would convince Mr. Staple and the
“ world, that I was not capable of the
“ weakness imputed to me.”

“ Why, what would you have me do?
“ cried Miss Betsey.”—“ I would have you
“ write to Mr. Staple, answered the
“ other, and let him know the deception
“ his rival has put upon him.”—Miss
Betsey, who had always an aversion to any
thing of this kind, and thought it too
great a condescension to write on any
score to a man, who had pretended love
to her, shook her head at this proposal,
and exclaimed against it with the utmost
vehemence.

Miss Flora made use of all the argu-
ments she could think on, to bring her
off, from what she called so ill-judged a
pride;—among other things, she told
her, that in compassion to the despair that
gentleman had so feelingly expressed in
his letter, she ought to give him the con-
solation of knowing, that if he had not
gained so far on her affections as he wish-
ed, it was not because his rival had gained
more; and added, that the steps she per-
swaded

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swaded her to take, was such, as common justice to her own character had a right to exact from her.

Miss Betsy heard, but was not to be prevailed upon by all she could say on this subject; but the other, who had a greater share of artifice than, perhaps, was ever known in one of her years, would not give over the design she had formed in her head, and perceiving that the writing to a man was the greatest objection Miss Betsy had to letting Mr. Staple know she was not so much attached to his rival, as he imagined, took another way of working her to her purpose, which she thought would be less irksome.

“ Well then, my dear Miss Betsy,” said she, in the most flattering accent, “ I will tell you the only method you can take, and I am glad I have been so lucky to hit upon it:—you shall let me go, and make Mr. Staple a visit as of my own accord;—I shall take care not to drop a syllable that may give him room to think you know of my coming; but yet as he may suppose I am enough in your secrets to be mistress of this, or at least not altogether a stranger to it, he will, doubtless, say something to me concerning the matter; but if

“ he should not, it will be easy for me,
 “ in the way of discourse, and as it were
 “ by chance, to express myself in such
 “ terms as will entirely clear you, and
 “ rid him of all the apprehensions he is
 “ under, of your being in love with Mr.
 “ Trueworth.”

Miss Betsey was not in her heart at all averse to Mr. Staple's having that eclatification Miss Flora had mentioned, and was much less shocked at this proposal, than she had been at the former, offered to her consideration for that purpose ; yet did not seem to come into it, 'till the other had lavished all the arguments that woman, witty and wilful to obtain her ends, could urge to prevail on her to do so ; and at last consented not to the execution, without exacting from Miss Flora the most solemn vow of an inviolable secrecy.

This project being concluded on, and every thing relating to it settled while they were dressing, they went together according to their promise to the ladies who expected them, and then accompanied them into the park ; but as if this was to be a day of surprizes to Miss Betsey, she here met with something which gave her, at least an equal share with that
 she

she had received from the letter of Mr. Staple.

They had not gone many yards in the Mall before they saw three gentlemen coming towards them; one of whom, as they drew nearer to each other, Miss Betsy and Miss Flora presently knew to be the son of alderman Saving, though he was grown fatter, more ruddy, and in many respects much altered from what he was when he visited at Mr. Goodman's.

As our young ladies had not heard of this gentleman's return to England, it was natural for them, especially Miss Betsy, after what had passed between them, to be in some little surprize at the sudden sight of him;—he was in some confusion too; but both parties had presence enough of mind to recover themselves, so as to salute as persons would do, who never had any thing more than an ordinary acquaintance with each other.

After the civilities common to people who thus meet by accident, Mr. Saving asked the ladies leave for himself and friends to join company; which being readily granted, they all walked up the Mall together; — but the place being pretty full, were obliged to divide them-

selves, and walk in couples, or as it happened, During this promenade, Mr. Saving found an opportunity of saying to Miss Betsey, unheard by any of the others, “Madam, I have something to acquaint you with, of great consequence to yourself:—it is improper for me either to come or write to you at Mr. Goodman’s, therefore with you would appoint some place where I might speak to you.”

Miss Betsey was very much startled at his mentioning such a thing, and replied, — “No, Mr. Saving, I do not make a practice of consenting to assignations with men, nor have yet forgot that which I consented to with you. — “I am very well able to clear myself of any fault on that score, said he, but, madam, to ease you of those apprehensions, which might, perhaps, make you think yourself obliged to keep me at a distance, it is proper to acquaint you, that I am married, and that it is only through a friendly regard for your honour and peace, that I would warn you against the perfidy of a pretended friend.”—Perceiving she started at these words, and repeated them two or three times over, “Yes, madam, resumed he, and if you will permit me to speak to you

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“ you in a proper place, will bring with
“ me an unquestionable proof of the truth
“ of what I say.”

One of the ladies happening to turn back to say something to Miss Betsy, prevented him from adding further ; but what he had already spoke, made a very deep impression on her mind.—She could not conceive, who the false friend should be, that he had mentioned, unless it were Miss Flora ; but though she had seen many instances of her insincerity, was not able to form any conjecture what she could have been guilty of to her, that Mr. Saving, who had been so long absent, could possibly be made acquainted with.

Thinking, however, that she ought not to deny herself the satisfaction of the eclairsissement he offered, especially as it was now to be given, not by a lover, but a friend, she sought and found a moment before they left the Mall, of saying to him without the notice of the company,
“ Sir, I have considered on the hint you
“ gave me ; — whatever concerns my
“ honour, or my peace, must certainly
“ merit my attention : — I have an ac-
“ quaintance in St. James’s palace, whom
“ I will visit as soon as dinner is over ;

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“ if you walk a turn or two in the gallery
“ leading to the chapel royal, you will
“ see me pass that way between four and
“ five o’clock.” — To this Mr. Saving
replied, that he would not fail to attend
her there.

Miss Flora, who had been informed by
Miss Betsey, after they had parted from
Mr. Saving, that he was married, was
very full of the news when she came home,
but Mr. Goodman, to whom the whole
story of that affair had been related by
the alderman, said, that the young gentle-
man had done very wisely, in comply-
ing with the commands of his father ; and
added, that the lady had a very agreeable
person, a large fortune, and, above all,
was extremely modest and discreet ; so
that there was no room to doubt his hap-
piness. There was some further discourse
at table, concerning this new-wedded
pair ; but Miss Betsey took little share in
it, as giving herself no pains for the in-
terests of a person for whom she never
had any thing but the most perfect indif-
ference.

She was, notwithstanding, impatient
enough for the account she expected to
receive from him, and without saying one
word, either to Miss Flora, or any of the
family,

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family, where she was going, went at the time prefixed to the place she had appointed to meet him.

Mr. Saving, to avoid being accused of want of punctuality in the affairs of friendship, as he had been in those of love, came somewhat before his time into the palace. — As she ascended the great stairs she saw him looking through one of the windows, waiting her approach, which greatly pleased her, as she would not have thought it proper to have walked there alone, nor would have been willing to have departed without the gratification of that curiosity his words had excited in her.

Excepting the time of divine service, and when the king, or any of the royal family go to chapel, few places are more retired than this gallery, none, besides the officers of the household passing on business into some of the apartments, scarce ever going into it, so that the choice Miss Betsy made, in her appointment with Mr. Saving, was extremely judicious.

As the business on which they met, was of a nature very different from love and gallantry, and time was precious to them both, they need d not many compliments

pliments to usher in what Mr. Saving had to say :—he only, to excuse his behaviour to her, while he had professed himself her lover, was beginning to relate the sudden manner in which he had been forced abroad ; but she stopped him from going on, by telling him, she had heard the whole story of that affair from Mr. Goodman, to whom the alderman had made no secret of it.

“ I have only, then said he, to acquaint
 “ you, madam, that soon after my arrival
 “ in Holland, looking over some papers,
 “ that my father had put into my port-
 “ manteau for my instruction in the busi-
 “ ness I was sent to negotiate, I found
 “ among them a letter, which, doubtless,
 “ in the hurry he was in, he had shuffled
 “ with the others through mistake ;—
 “ which, pray madam,” continued he,
 giving her a paper, “ be pleased to pe-
 “ ruse, and tell me whether honour and
 “ justice did not oblige me to take the
 “ first opportunity of cautioning you
 “ against the baseness and malice of a
 “ person, you might otherwise, perhaps,
 “ confide in, on matters of more conse-
 “ quence to your peace, than any thing on
 “ my account could be.”

Mis.

Miss Betsy had no sooner taken the paper and looked on the superscription, which was to Alderman Saving, than she cried out, with great amazement, " Bless me ! — this is Miss Flora's hand." — " I think, said Mr. Saving, that I might safely venture to affirm it upon oath, having often seen her writing, and have even some of it at this instant by me, in a song she copied for me, on my first acquaintance with her ; — but read, madam, pursued he, read the wicked scroll, and see the methods she took to prevail on a father to banish from his presence, and the kingdom, an only son, and to trace that innocence and virtue which she hated, because incapable of imitating."

On this, Miss Betsy trembling, between a mixture of surprize and anger, hastily unfolded the letter, and found in it these lines, wrote in the same hand with the superscription :

" S I R,
" THE real esteem I have for all
" persons of honesty and probiry,
" obliges me to give you this seasonable
" warning of the greatest misfortune that
" can possibly befall a careful and a tender
C 6 " parent,

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“ parent, as I know you are ;— but not
 “ to keep you in suspense, — your son,
 “ Sir, — your only — your darling son !
 “ — that son whom you have educated
 “ with so much tenderness, and who is so
 “ deservedly dear to you, is on the verge
 “ of ruin : — his unhappy acquaintance
 “ with Mr. Goodman’s family has subject-
 “ ed him to the artifices of a young girl,
 “ whose little affairs are in the hands of
 “ that gentleman.—She is a great coquette,
 “ — if I had said, jilt too, I believe the
 “ injustice I should have done her cha-
 “ racter would not have been much ; but
 “ as her share, either of fortune or repu-
 “ tation, is very small, I cannot condemn
 “ her for putting in practice all the stra-
 “ tagems in her power of securing to her-
 “ self a future settlement by marriage.—
 “ I should, sir, only be sorry that the lot
 “ should fall upon your son, as I know,
 “ and the world acknowledges him to be
 “ a gentleman of much more promising
 “ expectations.— It is, however, a thing
 “ I fear too near concluded ; — he loves
 “ her to distraction, — will venture every
 “ thing for the gratification of his passion :
 “ — she has a great deal of cunning,
 “ though little understanding in things
 “ more becoming of her sex ; — she is
 “ gay, vain, and passionately fond of
 “ gaming, and all the expensive diver-
 “ sions

The consternation Miss Betsey was in, on reading this cruel invective, was such, as for some moments deprived her of the power of speaking. — Mr. Saving could neither wonder at, nor blame so just a resentment, yet to mitigate it in part, he confessed to her a secret, which, 'till then, she had been wholly ignorant of.

“ Though nothing, madam, said he,
“ can excuse the crime she has been guilty
“ of towards you, yet permit me to ac-
“ quaint you, that the malice is chiefly
“ levelled against me, and you are only
“ wounded through my sides.”

“ How can that be? cried she, she
“ does justice to your character, while she
“ defames mine in the most barbarous
“ manner.” — “ Meer artifice, madam,
“ answered he, to work my father to her
“ purpose, as I will presently convince
“ you.”

He then told her, that before he ever had the honour of seeing her, he had treated Miss Flora with some gallantries;
“ which, said he, her vanity made her
“ take as the addresses of a serious passion,
“ 'till those she found I afterwards made
“ to you convinced her to the contrary.—
“ This

“ This, madam, continued he, I am well
 “ assured of by her laying hold of every
 “ opportunity to reproach my incon-
 “ stancy, as she has termed it : — finding
 “ how little I regarded all she said to me
 “ on that score, and still persisted in my
 “ devoirs to you, she doubtless had re-
 “ course to this most wicked stratagem to
 “ cut me off from all hope, even though it
 “ had been in my power to have inclined
 “ you to favour my suit.”

Miss Betsy found this supposition so reasonable, and so conformable to the temper of Miss Flora, that she agreed with Mr. Saving in it.—She did not now wonder at her wishing to be revenged on him, but could not brook with patience the method she took for being so, and said, that if Mr. Goodman did not do her justice on the author of so infamous a libel, she would immediately quit the house, and chuse another guardian.

“ Hold, madam, said he, I must in-
 “ treat you will give me leave to remind
 “ you of the consequences that may pos-
 “ sibly attend your taking such a step.—
 “ I own with you, that treachery and ca-
 “ lumny, such as her’s, cannot be too se-
 “ verely exposed and punished ; but,
 “ madam, consider, that in order to do
 “ this,

“ this, the accident which brought the
“ letter into my possession, and the oppor-
“ tunity you have allowed me of present-
“ ing it to you, must be made known,
“ the latter of which you may be confi-
“ dent she would not fail to make such
“ representations of, as would not only
“ hurt me, both with my father and my
“ wife, but also furnish the malicious
“ world, too apt to judge by appearances,
“ with some pretence for casting a blemish
“ on your own reputation.”

These remonstrances had some part of the effect they were intended for on the mind of Miss Betsy, yet having an aversion to dissimulation, and not knowing whether she could be able to conceal either her resentment or the cause of it, she cried out hastily, without considering what she said,
“ Why then did you let me know the in-
“ jury done me, since it is improper for
“ me to do any thing that might extort a
“ reparation ?”

“ I could not, madam, replied he, be-
“ hold you harbouring a snake in your
“ bosom without warning you of the sting.
“ — I am certain the easing you of my
“ troublesome addresses has been no cause
“ of mortification ; and it was not that
“ you should revenge what she has already
“ done,

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“ done, but to put you upon your guard
“ against any thing she may hereafter at-
“ tempt to do, that I resolved to take the
“ first opportunity of letting you see what
“ she was capable of.”

Miss Betsy was by this time fully persuaded by his arguments, but could not forbear complaining of the difficulty it would be to her to look, or speak civilly, to sleep in the same bed, or behave in any respect as she had been accustomed, towards so unworthy a creature ; — she thanked him, however, for his good intentions to her, and before they parted, promised to follow his advice, if it were only, as she said, in consideration, that to act in a different manner might be a prejudice to his domestic peace.



C H A P. IV.

Has very little in it, besides a collection of letters, some of which are much to the purpose, others less so.

MISS Betsey, after having taken leave of Mr. Saving, went to the apartment of her friend, where she staid supper, not because she was at that time capable of being entertained, either with the elegancies of the table, or the company, which happened to be pretty numerous; but merely to amuse and recover herself from the shock, which the late discovery of Miss Flora's infidelity had given her.

On her coming home, she found the family not yet gone to bed, though it was then near one o'clock. — Mr. Goodman was in high good humour, and said to her, “ Miss Betsey, you have lost some hours of contentment by being abroad, — Mr. Truworth has been here, and did us the favour to pass the whole evening with us; but that is not all, — three letters have been left for you, — two of them came by the post, and are, I know, by the superscription, from Mr. Francis

“ Francis Thoughtless, and Lady Trufty :
 “ — the other I am informed was left
 “ for you by a porter, but your curiosity
 “ must wait for these, — I have still
 “ better news for you, — your eldest
 “ brother, Mr. Thomas Thoughtless, is
 “ coming home, — I have received a letter
 “ from him, which tells me he has finished
 “ his tour, and we shall soon have him
 “ among us. — See, continued he, what
 “ he says.”

In speaking these words, he took the letter out of his pocket, and gave her to read : — it contained these lines :

To Mr. GOODMAN.

WORTHY SIR,

• I HAVE been for upwards of a month
 • detained on a party of pleasure, at
 • the chateau of Monsieur le Marquis de
 • St. Amand, so was not so happy to re-
 • ceive yours of the seventh and twenty-
 • second instant, ’till yesterday, when I
 • returned to Paris. — I thank you for
 • the long and particular account you give
 • me of those affairs which are entrusted
 • to your care. — As to what you tell me
 • concerning my brother Frank’s having
 • left the university, I am not sorry for
 • it, nor can at all wonder, that a young
 • fellow

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‘ fellow of his metal should be willing to
 ‘ exchange the hopes of a mitre for a
 ‘ truncheon.—I have not heard from him
 ‘ since I left Florence, but believe it is
 ‘ owing to his want of knowing where to
 ‘ direct to me, my stages afterwards hav-
 ‘ ing been pretty uncertain ; but finding
 ‘ by yours that he is now with Sir Ralph
 ‘ Trusty, shall accompany a letter I am
 ‘ obliged to send to that gentleman, with
 ‘ one to him.—I forgive my sister’s not
 ‘ writing when you did, as you give me
 ‘ some hints she is likely soon to become
 ‘ a bride : — a matter, I confess, sufficient
 ‘ to engross the whole thoughts of a young
 ‘ lady ; be pleased to assure her of my
 ‘ good wishes in this, and all other events.
 ‘ —As you say she has two very advan-
 ‘ tageous offers, I flatter myself, through
 ‘ your good advice and inspection, she
 ‘ will take the best.

‘ In my last, I mentioned somewhat of
 ‘ a design I had, to pass a few months in
 ‘ the southern parts of this kingdom ; but
 ‘ I have since changed my mind, and am
 ‘ determined on returning to my native
 ‘ country with all possible expedition ; —
 ‘ I believe you may expect me in three
 ‘ or four weeks at farthest. — If, sir, you
 ‘ could within that time hear of a house,
 ‘ agreeably situated, for my use, I should
 ‘ esteem

‘ esteem it as a considerable addition to
 ‘ the favours our family, and myself in
 ‘ particular, have received from you
 ‘ since the death of our dear father. — I
 ‘ should approve of St. James’s Square,
 ‘ if rents are not too exorbitant; for in
 ‘ that case a house in any of the adjoining
 ‘ streets must content me: — I would not
 ‘ willingly exceed an hundred, or an hun-
 ‘ dred and ten pounds per annum; but
 ‘ would be as near the park and palace as
 ‘ possible.

‘ I kiss Lady Mellafin’s and her fair
 ‘ daughter’s hand’s, and am,

‘ With very great respect,

‘ S I R,

‘ Your most obliged,

‘ And most obedient servant,

‘ T. THOUGHTLESS.’

Miss Betsy was very glad to find a
 brother; who had now been near five years
 abroad, was at last coming home, and
 much more so, that he intended to set up
 housekeeping in London, because, as
 doubting not he would be pleased to have
 her with him, she would have a fair pre-
 tence

tence for quitting Mr. Goodman's house, and the society of Miss Flora, who had now rendered herself so irksome to her.

This did not hinder her, however, from reproaching Mr. Goodman for having mentioned to her brother any thing in relation to her lovers; — “ You see, Sir, said she, that the one of them has already abandoned me, and you will also see, in a short time, that the other will be little the better for his rival's resignation.”

To this Mr. Goodman pleasantly replied, that whatever she pretended at present, he believed better things from her good sense, and the merits of Mr. Trueworth; to which Miss Betsy, unwilling to prolong the conversation, only told him, he would find himself mistaken, and ran hastily up stairs, to examine the contents of those letters, which, she had heard, lay on her toilet, ready for her proposal. — The first she broke open was from Miss Forward, knowing it to be her's by the hand, and eager to see the event of a fate, which, by the history she had given her, had appeared so doubtful.

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To Miss BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

Dear Miss Betsy,

SINCE I saw you I have been driven to the last despair: — the kind supply you left with me was quite exhausted, and I must infallibly have perished, through want of the common necessaries of life, and the cruel usage of my mercenary landlady, if my poor aunt in the country had not sent me a little present, which for a small space of time afforded relief, but accompanied with the melancholy account that my father was inexorable to her persuasions, — would not hear of my return to L———e, and vowed never to see me more, or own me for his child: — soon was I again reduced to the lowest ebb of misery; — had scarce sufficient to furnish the provisions of another day, and was even threatened to be turned out of doors by the inhuman hag, who I very well remember, you said, had her soul pictured in her countenance; — but, my dear friend, in the midst of this distress, and when I thought no human help was near, my affairs took a most sudden and unexpected turn. — Fortune threw in my way a kinsman of my mother's, whom I had never seen, or even heard of before; —
bc

' he compassionated my calamitous condi-
 ' tion, — removed me from that dismal
 ' place, allows me a handsome mainte-
 ' nance, and has promised to continue it,
 ' 'till nature, and the endeavours of my
 ' good aunt, shall work my father to a
 ' more gentle temper.

' I long to see you, and would have
 ' waited on you to return the money you
 ' were so kind to lend me, but knew not
 ' whether it were proper for me to do so,
 ' as I am wholly unacquainted with the fa-
 ' mily where you are. — A visit from you
 ' would therefore now be doubly agree-
 ' able, as I am lodged in a house less un-
 ' worthy to receive you, than that wretched
 ' one to which I before took the liberty
 ' to make you an invitation.

' You may now find me at Mr. Screener's,
 ' the very next door to the Bedford-Head,
 ' in Tavistock-street, in Covent-garden,
 ' where, I flatter myself, your good-nature
 ' will soon bring you to her, who is im-
 ' patient for that happiness, and will al-
 ' ways be, dear Miss Betsy,

' Your very affectionate,

' And most humble servant,

' A. FORWARD,

' P. S.

‘ P.S. I had forgot to tell you that I am
 ‘ every Friday engaged at my above-
 ‘ mentioned good cousin’s, and should
 ‘ never have forgiven myself, if, by this
 ‘ omission, you had lost your labour,
 ‘ and I the pleasure of your company.’

Miss Betsy, who little doubted the sincerity of this epistle, was very much touched with it, and resolved to comply with the invitation it contained, in a short time. — She now began to grow pretty sleepy, and would, probably, have deferr’d the perusal of the other two letters, ’till next morning, if Miss Flora had not come up to go to bed: — to avoid, therefore, entering into any conversation with her, she took up the first that came to hand, and found the contents as follows:

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ My dear sister,

‘ AS Mr. Goodman’s endeavours for
 ‘ procuring me a commission have not
 ‘ yet been attended with the desired
 ‘ success, I have been prevailed upon by
 ‘ the solicitations of my friends, to give
 ‘ them my promise of passing some part
 ‘ of the hunting season in L———e,
 ‘ so shall not see you so soon as my last
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‘ might make you expect ; — but I will
‘ not dissemble so far as to tell you, that
‘ to give you this information is the chief
‘ motive of my writing to you at present :
‘ — no, my dear Betsy ! it is one of
‘ much more consequence that now di-
‘ rects my pen. — It is to give you such
‘ remonstrances, as, I fear, you stand but
‘ in too much need of, to beware how you
‘ disregard the smiles of fortune, and be-
‘ come the enemy of your own happiness.
‘ — I received a letter yesterday from
‘ Mr. Truworth ; — he complains sadly
‘ of my staying in the country, and seems
‘ to think my presence necessary for the
‘ advancement of his courtship to you. —
‘ I shall be always glad to be obliged by
‘ you on any score, but extremely sorry
‘ to find my interests with you, as a bro-
‘ ther, should have more effect on you
‘ than your own reason, and the merits of
‘ one of the most deserving men on earth.
‘ — I have no pretence to claim any au-
‘ thority over you by the ties of blood,
‘ but may certainly flatter myself with
‘ having some influence over you as a
‘ friend, — enough at least, I hope, to
‘ to prevail on you to consider seriously on
‘ this matter, and am persuaded, that if
‘ you once bring yourself to do so, Mr.
‘ Truworth will want no other advocate
‘ to plead his cause, than your own under-
‘ standing.

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 51

' standing. — I am willing to believe the
 ' assurance you gave me in your last, of
 ' your heart being free from any impres-
 ' sion yet endeavoured to be made upon
 ' it; did I think otherwise, I should be
 ' entirely silent on this occasion.—I would
 ' be far, my dear sister, from opposing
 ' your inclinations, I would only wish to
 ' direct them where there is a prospect of
 ' the most felicity: — let me conjure
 ' you, therefore, to open your unpreju-
 ' diced eyes, nor be wilfully blind to the
 ' good intended for you by your better
 ' stars. — As you can never expect pro-
 ' posals of more advantage, than those
 ' the love of Mr. Truworth has inclined
 ' him to make you, I may be pretty con-
 ' fident, that you have not a friend in
 ' the world, who would not highly con-
 ' demn your want of giving due atten-
 ' tion to it. — Forgive the warmth with
 ' which I express myself, as it springs
 ' from the sincerest zeal for the establish-
 ' ment of your interest and happiness, than
 ' which nothing is more at the heart of
 ' him, who is,

' With the most tender regard,

' Dear sister,

' Your very affectionate friend,

' And brother,

' F. THOUGHTLESS.'

While Miss Betsy was reading these letters, Miss Flora, who immediately followed her into the chamber, would fain have interrupted her by one impertinent question or another : but receiving no answer to any thing she said, gave over speaking, and went directly to bed ; and Miss Betsy breaking open the third and last letter she had to peruse, found it contain'd as follows :

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ My dear Miss Betsy,

‘ I HAD wrote to you before, if I had
‘ not been prevented by an inflammation in my eyes, which, for some time
‘ past, has rendered my pen of no use
‘ to me, and I did not chuse to employ
‘ an amanuensis in what I have to say
‘ to you, but now take the first opportunity, being somewhat better, of giving you that advice, which, it may be
‘ reasonably supposed, a person of your
‘ years and experience of the world may
‘ stand in need of ; or, if not so, will be
‘ of some service in corroborating the
‘ good sentiments you are already inspir’d
‘ with.

It

' It was with an extreme concern I
 ' heard what happened on your account
 ' at Oxford, and hope you have so well
 ' reflected on the danger you were in, the
 ' consequences that attended it, and how
 ' much worse might probably have en-
 ' sued, as to be ever since more circum-
 ' spect and careful with what company,
 ' you trust yourself. — I am far from re-
 ' proaching you with the effects of an
 ' accident altogether unforeseen, and im-
 ' possible to be even guessed at by you,
 ' but would beg you to keep always in
 ' your mind, that what has been, may,
 ' some time or other, be again; and that
 ' repeated inadvertencies may make hea-
 ' ven weary of continuing its protection;
 ' — but, my dear Miss Betsy, it is not
 ' in my apprehensions of your own con-
 ' duct, that the greatest part of my fear
 ' for you consists; — the world, alas!
 ' and more particularly the place you live
 ' in, affords but too many wretches; of
 ' both sexes, who make it their business
 ' to entrap unwary innocence, and the
 ' most fair pretences, are often the cover
 ' to the most foul designs! — there are
 ' so many daily instances of the strictest
 ' caution not being always a sufficient
 ' security against the snares laid for our
 ' destruction, that I look on it as half a

D 3

miracle,

‘ miracle, when a young woman, hand-
‘ some, and exposed as you are, escapes
‘ unprejudiced, either in her virtue or
‘ reputation. — Consider, my dear child,
‘ you have no tender mother, whose pre-
‘ cepts and example might keep you
‘ steady in the paths of prudence ; — no
‘ father, whose authority might awe the
‘ daring libertine from any injurious at-
‘ tack ; and are but too much mistress of
‘ yourself. — In fine, thus environed with
‘ temptations, I see no real defence for
‘ you but in a good husband. — I have
‘ ever condemned rushing too early into
‘ marriage, and of risking for the sake
‘ of one convenience, the want, perhaps,
‘ of a thousand others ; but when an offer
‘ happens to be made, equally honourable
‘ and advantageous, and which affords an
‘ almost assured prospect of every thing
‘ necessary to complete the happiness of
‘ that state, it cannot be too soon in life
‘ accepted. — I hear with pleasure, that an
‘ offer, such as I have been describing, is
‘ now presented to you, and it would give
‘ me an adequate concern to hear that you
‘ had rejected it. — I need not tell you
‘ I mean Mr. Truworth ; for though
‘ there be many others who make their
‘ addresses to you on the same score, yet
‘ I am entirely ignorant of every thing re-
‘ lating to them ; but I am well assured,
‘ not

' not only by your brother's testimony,
 ' but by several gentlemen of this county,
 ' that in the fortune, person, and amiable
 ' qualities of that gentleman are com-
 ' prised all that you either can, or ought
 ' to wish in a husband: — trifle not then
 ' with a heart so deserving of you; —
 ' scruple not to become a wife, when
 ' merit, such as his, invites, and so many
 ' reasons concur to urge you to consent.
 ' — Believe me, there is more true felicity
 ' in the sincere and tender friendship of
 ' one man of honour, than in all the flat-
 ' tering professions of a thousand cox-
 ' combs. — I have much more to say to
 ' you on this head, but shall defer it, 'till
 ' you let me know with what kind of sen-
 ' timents it is that you regard the gentle-
 ' man I have been speaking of, which I
 ' beg you will do without disguise: — be
 ' satisfied that the secret of your real in-
 ' clinations will be as safe in my keeping
 ' as your own, and that I am,

' With the most perfect amity,

' My dear Miss Betsy,

' Your constant friend,

' And humble servant,

' M. TRUSTY.

The time of night did not permit Miss Betsey to give these letters all the attention which the writers of them, doubtless, desired she should do; but she locked them careful in her cabinet, resolving to consider the purport of them more seriously before she returned any answer.



CHAP. V.

Serves as a Supplement to the former.

THE next morning Miss Flora open'd her lips almost as soon as she did her eyes, to talk to Miss Betsey on the design that had been agreed upon between them the day before, in relation to Mr. Staple. — She told her, she had employed her whole thoughts about it ever since, and that she had found out a way of introducing the discourse, so as to give him no suspicion that she came from her, yet, at the same time take away all his apprehensions of her being in love with Mr. Trueworth; and added, that she would go to his lodgings immediately after breakfast.

“ Indeed, (replied Miss Betsey sullenly)
 “ you shall do no such thing; — I do not
 “ care

"care what his apprehensions are, or any
 "one's else;—the men may all think and
 "do as they will, — I shall not fill my
 "mind with any stuff about them." —
 "Heyday, cried Miss Flora, a good deal
 "shocked at this sudden turn, what whim
 "has got possession of you now?" "The
 "whim you endeavoured to possess me
 "with, said Miss Betsy scornfully, would
 "have been a very ridiculous one I am
 "sure;—but I have considered better on
 "it, and despise such foolish fancies." —
 "Good-lack, returned the other, you are
 "grown wonderous wise methinks, —
 "at least imagine yourself so; — but I
 "shall go to Mr. Staple for all this, —
 "I cannot bear that he should think you
 "are in love with Mr. Truworth."—"I
 "know no business, said Miss Betsy, in a
 "haughty tone, you have either with my
 "love or hate; and I desire, for the fu-
 "ture, you will forbear troubling your
 "head in my affairs."

Miss Flora then told her, that what she
 had offered was merely in regard to her
 reputation, and then ran over again all
 the arguments she had urged, in order to
 prevail on her to come into the measures
 she proposed; — but whatever she said,
 either in the wheedling or remonstrating
 accent, was equally ineffectual, the other

remained firm in her resolution, and behaved in a manner so different from what Miss Flora had ever seen her do before, that she knew not what to think of it. — Having her own reasons, however, to bring her, if possible, to a less grave way of thinking, she omitted nothing in the power of artifice, that she imagined might be conducive to that end. — All the time they were rising, — all the time they were dressing, did she continue to labour on this score, without being able to obtain any other answers to what she said, than such as were peremptorily in the negative.

It is certain, that Miss Betsy was of so soft and tractable a disposition, that half the arguments Miss Flora had alledged, would, at another time, have won her to consent to things of much greater consequence than this appeared to be; but the discovery she had the day before made of her deceit, and the little good-will she had towards her, gave her sufficient reason to apprehend, that she had some further designs than she pretended in this project, though of what nature it could be was not in her power to conceive. — The thing in dispute seemed to her extremely trifling in itself, but the eagerness with which she ~~was pressed~~ ^{was pressed} to it, by a person

of whose treachery she had so flagrant a proof, convinced her, that she ought not on any account to acquiesce.

Miss Flora, on the other hand, was disconcerted beyond measure at this unexpected change in Miss Betsy's humour, of which she was as little able to divine the cause, as the other was to guess the design she had formed; but determining to accomplish her point, if possible, at any rate, she endeavoured all she could to dissemble her chagrin, and still affected a mighty regard for the honour of Miss Betsy, telling her she was resolved to serve her whether she would or not, and that how much soever she disapproved it, she should pursue her first intention, and undeceive Mr. Staple in the opinion he had, of her being so silly as to fall in love with Mr. Truworth.

Miss Betsy on hearing this, and not doubting but she would do as she had said, turned towards her, and looking full upon her, with a countenance composed enough, but which had yet in it somewhat between the ironical and severe, replied in these terms: — “ Since you are
 “ so much bent, said she, on making a
 “ visit to Mr. Staple, far be it from me,
 “ Miss Flora, to deprive that gentleman

“ of the favour you intend him, provide
 “ you give me your promise, in the pre-
 “ sence of Mr. Goodman; and he will let
 “ your security for the performance of it
 “ that you will mention neither my name
 “, nor that of Mr. Truworth, and above
 “ all, that you will not pretend to have
 “ any knowledge of affairs you never have
 “ been trusted with.”

However inconsiderate, or incautious
 Miss Betsy may appear to the reader, as
 to her conduct in general, it must be ac-
 knowledged, that at this time she shewed
 an uncommon presence of mind. — This
 was, indeed, the only way to put a stop
 and quash at once that scheme, which her
 false friend had formed to do her a re-
 prejudice, under the pretence of serving
 her.

It is not in words to express the con-
 fusion Miss Flora was in, on hearing Miss
 Betsy speak in this manner. — Bold
 she was by nature, and habituated
 repartee, she had not now the power of in-
 tering one word: innocence itself, when
 over-awed by authority, could not have
 stood more daunted and abashed, when
 the other, with a careless air, added, —
 “ As soon as we go down stairs I shall
 “ speak

“ speak to Mr. Goodman about this matter.”

Whether Miss Betsy really intended to put this menace in execution, or not, is uncertain; for Miss Flora recovering her spirits, and her cunning at the same time, affected to burst into a violent fit of laughter, — “ Mr. Goodman! said she; “ mighty pretty, indeed! — you would “ trouble Mr. Goodman with the little “ impertinences we talk on between ourselves! but do so, if you think proper. “ — I shall tell him the truth, that I “ made this proposal to you only to try “ you, and but acted the second part of “ what Mr. Chatfree had begun. — You “ did not imagine sure, (continued she, “ with a malicious sneer) that I loved you “ so well, that for your sake I would “ hazard my person and reputation, by “ going to see a young gay fellow at his “ own lodgings.”

“ As for that,” cried Miss Betsy, with a look as contemptuous as she could possibly assume, “ I am equally well acquainted with the modesty and simplicity of Miss Flora, and know how to “ set a just value upon both.” — In speaking these words, having now got on her cloaths, she flung out of the room without

without staying to hear what answer the other would have made.

After this, these two high spirits had little intercourse, never speaking to each other, but on such common affairs as were unavoidable between persons who lived in the same house, eat at the same table, and lay in the same bed.—How Miss Flora employed her thoughts will very shortly be seen, but we must first examine what effects these late occurrences had on the mind of Miss Betsey.

Young as she was, she might be said to have seen a great deal of the world; and as she had a fine understanding, and a very just notion of things, wanted only to reflect on the many follies and deceits which some of those who call themselves the beau monde are guilty of, to be enabled to despise them.—The last letter she had received from Lady Trusty made a strong impression on her, and casting a retrospect on several past transactions she had been witness of, as well as those she had been concerned in herself, began to wonder at, and condemn the vanity of being pleased with such shadowy things:—such fleeting, unsubstantial delights, accompanied with noise and hurry in the passion, and attended with weariness and

and vexation of spirit. — A multiplicity of admirers seemed now to her among this number:—her soul confessed, that to encourage the addresses of a fop, was both dangerous and silly; and to flatter with vain hopes the sincere passion of a man of honour, was equally ungenerous and cruel.

These considerations were very favourable to Mr. Truworth:—she ran through every particular of that gentleman's character and behaviour, and could find nothing which could make her stand excused even to herself, for continuing to treat him with the little seriousness she had hitherto done.

“What then shall I do with him?”
 “said she to herself. Must I at once dis-
 “card him, — desire him to desist his
 “visits, and tell him I am determined
 “never to be his! — or must I resolve
 “to think of marrying him, and hence-
 “forward entertain him, as the man who
 “is really ordained to be one day my
 “husband! — I have at present rather an
 “aversion, than an inclination to a wed-
 “ded state; yet if my mind should alter
 “in this point, where shall I find a part-
 “ner so qualified to make me happy in
 “it? — but yet, continued she, to be-
 “come

“ come a matron at my years, is what
 “ I cannot brook the thoughts of ;—if he
 “ loves me, he must wait,—it will be suf-
 “ ficient to receive the addresses of no
 “ other : but then how shall I refuse those
 “ who shall make an offer of them, with-
 “ out giving the world room to believe I
 “ am pre-engaged ?”

Thus did she argue with herself,—the
 dilemma appeared hard to her, but what
 was the result of her reasoning, will
 best appear in the answer she sent to Lady
 Trusty’s letter, which was in the following
 terms :

To Lady TRUSTY.

‘ MADAM,

‘ I RECEIVED the honour of yours, and
 ‘ sincerely thank you for the good wishes
 ‘ and advice contained in it : be assured,
 ‘ madam, I have a just sense of the value
 ‘ I ought to set upon them, and shall
 ‘ henceforth do the utmost in my power
 ‘ to deserve it. ——— I have, indeed,
 ‘ no parent to direct, and but few faith-
 ‘ ful friends to guide me through the
 ‘ perplexing labyrinth of life. — I con-
 ‘ fess, I have been too often misled by
 ‘ the prevalence of example, and my
 ‘ own idle caprice ; — it is therefore the
 “ highest

' highest charity to shew me to myself.
 ' — I now see, and am ashamed of the
 ' many inadvertencies I have been guilty
 ' of—The dangers which a young wo-
 ' man, like me, must necessarily be conti-
 ' nually exposed to, appear to me, from
 ' what you say of them, in their proper
 ' colours, and convince me, that no per-
 ' son of understanding would condemn
 ' me, if to avoid so many threaten'd ills,
 ' I flew to that asylum your ladyship has
 ' mentioned. — I will own to you yet
 ' farther, madam, that I am not insen-
 ' sible of the merits of Mr. Truworth,
 ' nor of the advantages, which would at-
 ' tend my acceptance of his proposals:
 ' but I know not how it is, I cannot all
 ' at once bring myself into a liking of
 ' the marriage state. — Be assured of this,
 ' that I never yet have seen any man,
 ' whom my heart has been more inclined
 ' to favour, and that, at present, I nei-
 ' ther receive, nor desire the addresses of
 ' any other.—There is no answering for
 ' events, but, in the way of thinking I
 ' now am, it seems not improbable, that
 ' I shall one day comply with what my
 ' friends take so much pains in perswad-
 ' ing me to. — In the mean time, I be-
 ' seech you to believe I shall regulate my
 ' conduct, so as to ease you of all those
 ' appre-

' apprehensions you are so good to enter-
' tain on my account. I am,

' With a profound respect,

' MADHM,

' Your ladyship's most obliged

' And most devoted servant,

' E. THOUGHTLESS.'

Miss Betty also answer'd her brother's letter at the same time; but the purport of it being much the same with that she wrote to Lady Trusty, there is no occasion for inserting it.

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CHAP. VI.

Seems to bring things pretty near a conclusion.

MISS Betsy was now in as happy a disposition as any of her friends, or even Mr. Truworth himself could desire: — she listen'd to the confirmations he was every day giving her of his passion, with the greatest affability, and much more seriousness and attention, than she had been accusom'd. — The quarrel she had with Miss Flora making her willing to avoid her as much as possible, he was frequently alone with her whole hours together, and had all the opportunities he could wish of cultivating the esteem, she made no scruple of confessing she had for him. — As Mr. Staple was now gone out of town, pursuant to the resolution he had taken, and no other rival, at least none encouraged by Miss Betsy, had as yet seconded him, he had all the reason in the world to flatter himself, that the accomplishment of his wishes were not far distant.

Plays,

Plays, — operas, — and masquerade were now beginning to come into vogue and he had the satisfaction to see his mistress refuse whatever tickets were offered her for those diversions, by any of the gentlemen who visited Lady Mellasin, and at the same time readily agreed to accompany him to those, or any other public entertainments, whenever he requested the favour of her.

Miss Betsey's behaviour in this point however, had more the air, than the reality of kindness to Mr. Trueworth; in effect it was not because she would not accept of tickets from any other person than himself, but because they were offered by gentlemen of Lady Mellasin's acquaintance, and consequently, in respect to her Miss Flora had the same in the invitation with whom she was determined never more to be seen abroad.

This required some sort of contrivance to be managed in such a manner as give no umbrage to Mr. Goodman or Lady Mellasin, for the former of whom she had always a very great esteem, and did not chuse to afford the latter any cause of complaint against her, while she continued to live in the same house. — The method

she took therefore to avoid a thing so disagreeable to her, and at the same time to give no occasion of offence, was always to make choice of one diversion, when she knew Miss Flora was pre-engaged to another.

To partake of these pleasures, which Mr. Trueworth, seeing into her temper, was almost every day presenting, she invited sometimes one lady, sometimes another of those she conversed with, ; but the person who most frequently accompanied her, was Miss Mabel, a young lady, who lived in the next street, and whom she had been acquainted with ever since her coming to London, but had not been altogether so agreeable to her, as she really deserved, and otherwise would have been, if Lady Mellasin and Miss Flora had not represented her as a prying, censorious, ill-natur'd creature, and, in fine, given her all the epithets which compose the character of a prude.

She was, indeed, both in principles and behaviour, the very reverse of Miss Flora; — she was modest without affectation, — reserved without austerity, — chearful without levity, — compassionate and benevolent in her nature, — and, to crown all, was perfectly sincere; — Miss Betsy had

had never wanted penetration enough to see, and to admire the amiable qualities of this young lady, nor had been at all influenced by the character given of her. Lady Mellasini and Miss Flora, but being herself of too gay and volatile a temper, the more serious deportment of the other gave somewhat of a check to her's, and for that reason rendered her society less coveted by her. — The letter of Lady Trusty, however, joined to the late accidents which had happen'd, having now given her a turn of mind vastly different from what it had been a very little time before, made her now prefer the conversation of Miss Mabel to most others of her acquaintance.

This young lady having been often in Mr. Truworth's company, with Miss Betsy, saw enough into him to be assured the passion he professed for her was perfectly honourable and sincere; and as she had a real affection for her fair friend, she thought it a match greatly to her advantage, was perpetually remonstrating to him that she could not treat with too much complaisance, a lover so every way deserving of her.

It is certain, that what she said on this score, had some weight with Miss Betsy.

M

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Mr. Goodman also was every day admonishing her in behalf of Mr. Truworth, as he thought it his duty so to do, both as her guardian and her friend.—In fine, never was a heart more beset,—more forced, as it were, into tender sentiments than that of this young lady:—first by the merits and assiduities of the passionate invader, and next by the persuasion of all those, who she had any reason to believe had her interest in view, and wish'd to see her happiness establish'd.

Enemy as she was by nature to serious reflection, on any account, much more on that of marriage, every thing now contributed to compel her to it; she could not avoid seeing and confessing within herself, that if ever she became a wife, the title could not be attended with more felicity, than when conferred on her by a person of Mr. Truworth's fortune, character, and disposition.

She was one day alone, and in a very considerative mood, when a letter was brought to her, which she was told came by the penny-post; as she was not accustomed to receive any by that carriage, it pretty much surpris'd her, but much more so, when having hastily opened it, she found the contents as follows:

To

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ MADAM,

‘ IT is with an inexpressible concern,
‘ that I relate to you a thing, which I
‘ am but too sensible will give you some
‘ disquiet, nor could have prevailed with
‘ myself on any terms to have done it,
‘ were it not to preserve you from falling
‘ into much greater affliction than the dis-
‘ covery I am about to make, can possibly
‘ inflict : — but not to keep you in sus-
‘ pence, — you are courted by a gen-
‘ tleman whose name is Truworth : —
‘ he is recommended by your brother,
‘ who, alas ! knows him much less than
‘ he imagines : — he has indeed a large
‘ estate, and does not want accomplish-
‘ ments to endear him to the fair sex : —
‘ I wish he had as much intrinsic honour
‘ and sincerity to deserve, as he has per-
‘ sonal endowments to acquire the fa-
‘ vours so lavishly bestowed upon him.
‘ I hope, however, you have not been
‘ so much deceived by the innocence of
‘ your own heart, and the fancied inte-
‘ grity of his, as to be so distractedly in
‘ love with him, as he has the vanity to
‘ boast, and your companion and sup-
‘ posed friend, Miss Mabel, reports you
‘ are : — if his designs upon you are
‘ such

' such as they ought to be, he is at least
 ' ashamed to confess they are so ; and the
 ' lady I just mentioned, whispers it in all
 ' companies, that a marriage with you is
 ' of all things in the world the farthest
 ' from his thoughts. — He plainly says,
 ' that he but trifles with you, 'till your
 ' brothers come to town, and will then
 ' find some pretence to break entirely
 ' with you,—perhaps on the score of for-
 ' tune ; but of that I am not positive, —
 ' I only repeat some part of those unhand-
 ' some expressions his unworthy tongue
 ' has uttered.

' But, Madam, as I have given you
 ' this intelligence, so I think it my duty
 ' to offer you some advice for your be-
 ' haviour, in so nice and critical a junc-
 ' ture. — As he threatens to abandon you
 ' on the arrival of your brothers, I
 ' should think, that if you forbid him
 ' your presence, 'till that time, it would
 ' not only be a sure touchstone of his
 ' affection, but also be a means of clear-
 ' ing your reputation from those blemishes
 ' it has received on his account. — After
 ' what I have said, I believe it would be
 ' needless to add that the less freely you
 ' converse with Miss Mabel, the less you
 ' will suffer, both in the judgment of the
 ' world.

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‘ world, and your own future peace of
‘ mind.

‘ Slight not this counsel, because given
‘ behind the curtain, but be assured it
‘ comes from one, who is,

‘ With the sincerest attachment,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your most humble,

‘ Though concealed servant,’

If Miss Betsy had received this letter a very small time before she did, it might probably have wrought on her all the effect it was intended for; but she had scarce read it half through, before the lucky discovery of Miss Flora’s baseness, seasonably made to her by Mr. Saving, came fresh into her mind, and she was at no loss to guess at the malicious purpose, and the author of it, though wrote in a hand altogether a stranger to her.

She doubted not but it was a trick of Miss Flora’s, to cause a separation between her and Mr. Trueworth; but the motives, which had instigated her to do this, were not in her power to conceive.

“ Re-

“Revenge for her disappointed expectations,” said she to herself, “might make her take the steps she did, on Mr. Saving’s account; but what has Mr. Truworth done to her? — He never pretended love to her, — he neither flattered, or deceived her vanity, — it must be therefore only a wicked propensity — an envious — unsocial disposition, — a love of mischief implanted in her nature, and uncorrected by reason or principle, that has induced her to be guilty of this poor, — low, enervate spight; but I am resolved to mortify it.”

She was not long considering in what manner she should proceed, to do as she had said; and I believe the reader will acknowledge, she hit upon one, as effectual for that end as could have been contrived.

She appeared extremely gay the whole time of dinner, and as soon as it was over, “I will present you with a desert, Sir,” said she to Mr. Goodman: “I’ll shew you what pains has been taken to break off my acquaintance with Mr. Truworth, by some wretch, who either envies me the honour of his affections,

“or him the place they imagine he has
“in mine; but, I beseech you, read it,”
continued she, “and I will appeal to
“you, Lady Mellafin, and Miss Flora,
“if ever there was a more stupid plot.”

“Stupid enough, indeed,” cried the
honest merchant, as soon as he had done
reading, “but it is yet more base. — I am
“glad, however,” continued he, “to
“find your good sense prevents you from
“being imposed upon by such artifices.
—“This is so shallow a one,” answered
she, “that a very small share of under-
“standing might serve to defend any
“one from being deceived by it. — I
“pity the weakness, while I despise the
“baseness of such mean incendiaries; —
“Mr. Tuworth, however, will fare
“the better for this attempt against
“him; — I will now make no scruple
“of preferring him to all mankind be-
“sides,—and perhaps, when my brothers
“arrive, shall consent to every thing he
“desires.”

Lady Mellafin could not help applaud-
ing the spirit and resolution she shewed
on this occasion, and Mr. Goodman was
quite charmed with it; and both of them
joined in the severest exclamations against
the folly and wickedness of the letter-
writer;

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writer ; but Miss Flora said little, and as soon as she could quit the table with decency, went up into her chamber, saying, she had a piece of work in her hand, which she was in haste to finish.

If Miss Betsy had wanted any confirmation of the truth of her suspicions, the looks of Miss Flora, during this whole discourse, would have removed all doubt in her, and the opportunity of venting the spleen she had so justly conceived against her, without seeming to do so, gave her a most exquisite satisfaction.



C H A P. VII.

Is the better for being short.

MISS Flora retired to her chamber, indeed, not to employ herself in the manner she pretended, but to give a loose to passions more inordinate and outrageous, than it would naturally be believed could have taken possession of so young a heart.

But it is now high time to let the reader see into the secret springs, which set her wicked wit in motion, and in-

duced her to act in the manner she had done.

Through the whole course of the preceding pages, many hints have been given, that the inclinations of this young lady were far from being unblameable, and it will not seem strange, that a person of the disposition she has all along testified, should envy and malign those charms she every day saw so much extolled, and preferred above her own; but we do not ordinarily find one, who all gay and free like her, and who various times, and for various objects, had experienced those emotions which we call love, should, all at once, be inspired with a passion no less serious, that it was violent, for a person, who never made the least addresses to her on that account.

Yet so in effect it was: — Mr. Trueworth had been but a very few times in her company, before she began to entertain desires for her fair friend. — Whenever she had an opportunity of speaking to him alone, she made him many advances, which he either did not, or would not interpret in the sense she meant them. — This coldness, instead of abating, did but the more inflame her wishes, and looking on the passion he had for Miss Berfy,

as the only impediment to the gratification of her inclinations, she curst his constancy, and the beauties which excited it. — So true is that observation of Mr. Dryden,

- ‘ Love ! various minds does variously inspire ;
- ‘ He stirs in gentle natures gentle fires,
- ‘ Like that of incense on the altar laid ;
- ‘ But raging flames tempestuous souls invade.
- ‘ A fire which ev’ry windy passion blows,
- ‘ With pride it mounts, and with revenge it glows.’

Miss Flora was not of a temper, either to bear the pangs of hopeless love in silent grief, or to give way too readily to despair. — In spite of the indifference she found herself treated with by Mr. Trueworth, she was not without hope, that if she could by any means occasion a disunion between him and Miss Betsy, she would then be brought to cast his eyes on her, and return her flame with some degree of ardency.

It was for this end she had taken so much pains in endeavouring to persuade Miss Betsy, either to write, or suffer her to go, to Mr. Staple, in order as she

pretended, to undeceive that gentleman in his opinion, that she was in love with Mr. Trueworth; but her intentions, in reality, were to make him believe, that he himself was the favoured person, and had much the advantage over his rival in the affections of his mistress. — This she doubted not would make him quit his resolution of going into the country, and encourage him to renew his courtship with the same fervency as ever. — The pride she knew Miss Betsey took in a multiplicity of lovers, and the equality with which she had carried herself between him and Mr. Trueworth, and which probably she would continue, seemed to afford her a fair prospect of giving Mr. Trueworth so much cause of discontent, as to make him break off with a woman, who after what had passed made no distinction between him and the person he had twice vanquished in the field. — She knew it would, at least, create a great deal of perplexity among them, and delay, if not totally prevent, the completion of what she so much dreaded.

But this scheme being rendered abortive, by the seasonable discovery Miss Betsey had made of her perfidiousness, she sets her wits to work for some other new inven-

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invention, and believing that Miss Betsy's pride would immediately take fire on the least suspicion of any insult being offered, either to her beauty or reputation, procured an agent to write the above inserted letter; — the effect of which has been already shewn.

This disappointment was the more grievous to her, as she had so little expected it: — she broke the sticks of her fan, — tore every thing that came in her way, — flew about the room, like a princess in a tragedy; — wanting the means of venting the rage she was possessed of in great things, she exercised it in small. — A fine petticoat of Miss Betsy's happening to hang on the back of a chair, she threw a standish of ink upon it, as if by accident; and it was no breach of charity to believe, would have served the owner in a much worse manner, if her power had been equal to her will, and she could have done it without danger to herself.

To add to the fury and distraction of her mind, continuing still in her chamber, and happening to be pretty near the window, she saw Miss Betsy, Miss Mabel, and Mr. Truworth pass by in a landau, that gentleman having, it seems, invited these ladies on a party of pleasure: —

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"You shall not long enjoy this satisfaction," cried she to herself, "if it be in human wit to separate you;" — but at this sight, the turbulent passions of her soul becoming more outrageous, "O may the machine that conveys you be thrown from off its wheels!" pursued she: "May the wine you drink be poisoned. — May the first morsel you attempt to swallow, mistake its way, and choak you in the passage!"

Thus did she rave, not like one possessed with seven, but seven thousand fiends, and had perhaps remained in this wild way 'till her brain had been absolutely turned, if Lady Mellasin, having a great deal of company, had not positively commanded her to come down, after having sent several times in more mild terms, to let her know what friends were there.

It was some days before the unhappy, and more wicked, Miss Flora, could recollect her scattered senses, enough for the contrivance of any further mischief; but those evil spirits, to which she had yielded but too much the mastery of her heart, and all its faculties, at length inspired her with, and enabled her in the execution of, a design of the most barbarous

rous kind, and which for a time, she saw had success, even beyond her most sanguine expectations.

But while she was ruminating on projects, which had neither virtue nor generosity for their patrons, Miss Betsy passed her days in that cheerfulness which is the constant companion of uncorrupted innocence, and a mind uninfluenced by any tempestuous passions; — but as it is natural, even to the sweetest tempers, to take pleasure in the mortification of those who have endeavoured to injure us without cause given on our parts, she could not forbear being highly diverted to see the pains Miss Flora took to conceal the inward disturbance of her soul: — the awkward excuses she made, for the damage done her petticoat, gave her more satisfaction than she should have felt vexation for the spoiling the best thing she had in the world.

Miss Mabel, to whom Miss Betsy had imparted the whole of this affair, was not at all surprised at that part of the letter which related to herself, as she had often been informed, by several of her acquaintance, of the character given of her by that malicious girl; but neither of these

young ladies could be able to imagine, as they suspected not her passion for Mr. Trueworth, from what source this pretended enmity to him was derived.

It would certainly have greatly contributed to the happiness of that gentleman, to have known in what manner his mistress had resented the injustice had been done him; but Miss Betsy forbore to let him into the secret, as being already sufficiently convinced of the sincerity of his affection, and would not put him to the trouble of giving her new proofs of it, by shewing him the ridiculous accusation, anonymously formed against him.



C H A P. VIII.

Contains some incidents which will be found equally interesting and entertaining, or the author is very much mistaken.

MR. Trueworth had all the reason imaginable from the whole deportment of Miss Betsy towards him, to believe that there wanted little more for the conclusion of his marriage with her than the arrival

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arrival of her two brothers ; she had often told him, whenever he pressed her on that score, that she would give no definitive answer, 'till she had received the advice and approbation of the elder Mr. Thoughtless.

That gentleman was now expected in a few days, and Mr. Francis Thoughtless, having intelligence of his being on his return, was also preparing to leave L———e, in order to meet him on his first arrival in London ; but during this short space of time, some events fell out, which put a great damp on the gaiety of those, who had with so much impatience wished for their approach.

Mr. Truworth had an aunt, who besides being the nearest relation he had living, and the only one in London, was extremely respected by him, on account of her great prudence, exemplary virtue, and the tender affection she had always testified for him. — This good lady thought herself bound by duty, as she was led by love, to make a thorough enquiry into the character of the young person her nephew was about to marry : — she was acquainted with many who had been in company with Miss Betsy, and were witnesses of her behaviour ; — she asked the

the opinion of those among them, whom she looked upon as the most candid, concerning the match now on the carpet, and was extremely troubled to find their answers such, as were no way conformable to the idea Mr. Truworth had endeavoured to inspire her with of his mistress's perfections : — they all, indeed, agreed that she was handsome, — well shaped, — genteel, — had a great deal of wit, vivacity, and good humour ; but shook their heads when any of those requisites to make the married-state agreeable were mentioned.

Poor Miss Betsy, as the reader has had but too much opportunity to observe, was far from setting forth to any advantage the real good qualities she was possessed of : — on the contrary, the levity of her conduct rather disfigured the native innocence of her mind, and the purity of her intentions ; so that, according to the poet,

‘ All saw her spots, but few her brightness took.’

The old lady not being able to hear any thing concerning her intended niece, but what was greatly to her dissatisfaction, was continually remonstrating to Mr. Truworth

Truworth, that the want of solidity in a wife was one of the worst misfortunes that could attend a marriage state ; — that the external beauties of the person could not atone for the internal defects of the mind ; — that a too great gaiety du cœur, frequently led women into errors without their designing to be guilty of them ; and conjured him to consider well before the irrevocable words, ‘ I take you for better ‘ and for worse,’ were past, how ill it would suit, either with his honour, or his peace of mind, if she whom he now wished to make his partner for life should, after she became so, behave in the same manner she now did.

Mr. Truworth listened to what she said, with all the attention she could desire, but was too passionately in love to be much influenced by it ; — not that he did not see there were some mistakes in the conduct of Miss Betsy, which he could wish reformed, yet he could not look upon them as so dangerous to her virtue and reputation, and therefore omitted no arguments, which he thought might justify his choice, and clear the accused fair one from all blame, in the eyes of a person, whose approbation he was very desirous of obtaining.

The

The warmth with which he spoke convinced his aunt, that to oppose his inclinations in this point was only warring with the winds, she desisted from speaking any more against the marriage, and contented herself with telling him, that since he was bent on making Miss Betsey his wife, she should be glad if, at least, he would remove her into the country, and prevent her returning to this town as long as possible.

This last council had a great deal of weight with Mr. Truworth; — he had often wished in his heart, when seeing her, as he often did, encompassed with a crowd of such, whom his good understanding made him despise, that if ever he became her husband, it might be in his power to prevail on her, to break off acquaintance with the greatest part of those she at present conversed with; and now being admitted to entertain her with more freedom and seriousness than ever, he resolved to sound her sentiments on that score, and try to discover how far she could relish the retirements of a country life.

Accordingly, the next visit he made to her, he began to represent, in the most pathetic

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thetic terms he was able, the true felicity that two people, who loved each other, might enjoy when remote from the noise and interruption of a throng of giddy visitors.—“ The deity of soft desires, said he, flies the confused glare of pomp and public shews ;—’tis in the shady bowers, or on the banks of a sweet purling stream, he spreads his downy wings, and wafts ten thousand nameless pleasures on the fond,—the innocent,—and the happy pair.”

He was going on, but she interrupted him with a loud laugh ; — “ Hold, — hold, cried she, was there ever such a romantic description ? — I wonder how such silly ideas come into your head ? — Shady bowers ! and purling streams ! — — Heavens, how insipid ! — Well, (continued she) you may be the Strephon of the woods, if you think fit ; but I shall never envy the happiness of the Chloe that accompanies you in these fine recesses. — What ! to be cooped up like a tame dove, only to coo, — and bill, — and breed ? — O, it would be a delicious life indeed ! ”

Mr. Truworth now perceived, to his no small vexation, the late seriousness he had

had observed in Miss Betsy, and which had given him so much satisfaction, was no more than a short-lived interval, — a sudden start of reason and recollection soon dissipated, and that her temper, in reality, was still as light, as wild, and as inconsiderate as ever. — The ridicule with which she treated what he said, did not, however, hinder him from proceeding in the praise of a country life; but happening to say, that innocence could no where else be so secure, she presently took up the word, and with a disdainful air replied, that innocence in any one, but an idiot, might be secure in any place; to which he retorted, that reason was at some times absent, even in those who had the greatest share of it at others.

Many smart repartees passed between them on this subject, in most of which Miss Betsy had the better; but Mr. Trueworth, not willing to give up the point, reminded her that Solomon, the most luxuriant, and withal the wisest of men, pronounced that all the gaieties and magnificence of the earth were vanity and vexation of spirit. — “He did so,” replied she, with a scornful smile; “but it was not ’till he had enjoyed them all, and” was grown past the power of enjoying
“yet

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“ yet further : — when I am so, 'tis possible I may say the same.”

Mr. Trueworth finding she was pretty much stung at some things he had said, and conscious that in his discourse he had in some measure forgot the respect due from a lover to his mistress, would not pursue the topic any farther, but, as artfully as he could, turned the conversation on things more agreeable to Miss Betsy's way of thinking :—he could not, however, after they had parted, forbear ruminating on the contempt she had shewn of a country life, and was not so easy as the submissiveness of his passion made him affect to be, on taking leave. This was, however, a matter of slight moment to him, when compared with what soon after ensued.

I believe, that from the last letter of Miss Forward to Miss Betsy, the reader may suspect it was not by a kinsman she was maintained ; but it is proper to be more particular on that affair, and shew how that unfortunate creature, finding herself utterly discarded by her father, and abandoned to the utmost distresses, accepted of the offer made her by a rich Jew-merchant, of five guineas a week to be his mistress.

Bux

But as few women, who have once lost the sense of honour, ever recover it again, but, on the contrary, endeavour to lose all sense of shame also, devote themselves to vice, and act whatever interest or inclination prompts them to ; Miss Forward could not content herself with the embraces, nor allowances of her keeper, but received both the presents and caresses of as many as she had charms to attract.

Sir Basil Loveit was a great favourite with her, and if, among such a plurality, one might be said to have the preference, it was he :—this young Baronet had been intimately acquainted with Mr. Truworth abroad ; — they had travelled together through the greatest part of Italy, and had been separated only by Mr. Truworth's being called home, on account of some family affairs. — Sir Basil being but lately arrived, they had not seen each other since, 'till meeting by accident in a coffee-house, they renewed their former friendship.—After the usual compliments, Mr. Truworth proposed passing the evening together : to which Sir Basil replied, that he should be glad of the opportunity, but was engaged to sup with a lady ; but, said, he, after a pause, 'tis where I can be free, and you shall go with me. — To which

which the other having consented, Sir Bazil told him, as they were going towards the house, that there would be no occasion to use much ceremony; for it was only to a lady of pleasure he was conducting him; but added, that she was a fine girl, — seemed to have been well brought up, — had been but lately come upon the town, and behaved with more modesty than most of her profession.

Mr. Truworth had never any great relish for the conversation of these sort of women, much less now, when his whole heart was taken up with an honourable passion for a person, who, in spite of the little errors of her conduct, he thought deserving of his affections; yet, as he had given his promise, he imagined, that to go back would be too precise, and subject him to the raillery of his less scrupulous friend.

Miss Forward, for it was she to whom this visit was made, received them in a manner, which justified the character Sir Bazil had given of her. — There was, however, a certain air of libertinism, both in her looks and gestures, which would have convinced Mr. Truworth, if he had not been told so before, that she was one of those unhappy creatures, who make
traffic

traffic of their beauty. The gentlemen had not been there above a quarter of an hour, before a maid servant came into the room, and told Miss Forward, that a young lady, who said her name was Thoughtless, was at the door in a chair, and desired to see her; — “O my dear Miss Betsey Thoughtless, cried she, desire her to walk up immediately.” — “This is lucky, said Sir Basil, I wanted a companion for my friend, — now each man will have his bird.” — “Hush, cried Miss Forward, “I can assure you she is virtuous, — take care what you say.”

Mr. Trueworth was so much alarmed at hearing the name of Miss Betsey, that being retired to a window, in order to recover himself from the confusion he was in, that he heard not what Miss Forward had said to Sir Basil: — Miss Betsey presently entering the room, Miss Forward ran to embrace her, saying, “My dear Miss Betsey, how glad I am to see you!” — To which the other returned, “My dear Miss Forward, how ashamed am I to have been so long absent! — but one foolish thing or other has still prevented my coming.”

Sir

Sir Basil then saluted her with a great deal of politeness, though with less respect than doubtless he would have done, had he seen her in any other place. — Mr. Truworth, who by this time had resolved in what manner he should act, now turned, and advanced towards the company, — Miss Betsy, on seeing him, cried out, in some surprise, “ Mr. Truworth! good “ God! who thought of finding you “ here ?” — You did not, Madam, I dare “ answer, replied he, with a very grave “ air, and I as little expected the honour “ of meeting you here.” — O, you are “ acquainted then, said Sir Basil, laugh- “ ing, this is merry enough, — I find we “ are all right.”

Mr. Truworth made no direct answer to this, but endeavoured to assume a gaiety conformable to that of the company he was in : — after some little time being past in discoursing on ordinary affairs, Miss Forward took Miss Betsy into the next room to return the money she had been so kind to lend her at Mrs. Nightshade’s, and told her, she had much to say to her, but could not be so rude to leave the gentlemen for any long time. — While they were absent, which indeed was not above half a minute, “ This is a delicious girl,” said

said Sir Basil to Mr. Truworth, “i’faith, Charles, you will have the best of the market to night.” — What rely Mr. Truworth would have made is uncertain, — the ladies returned that instant, and the conversation became extremely sprightly, though, on Sir Basil’s part, sometimes interspersed with expressions not altogether consistent with that decorum, he would have observed towards women of reputation.

Miss Betsy, far from thinking any ill herself, took every thing as well meant, and replied to whatever was uttered by this gay young gentleman, with a freedom, which, to those who knew her not perfectly, might justly render liable to censure. — Mr. Truworth would fain have taken some share, if possible, in this conversation, in order to conceal the perplexity of his thoughts, but all his endeavours were ineffectual, and though his words were sometimes gay, the tone with which he spoke them plainly shewed, that his heart was very far from corresponding with his expressions.

Sir Basil having ordered a handsome supper, Miss Betsy staid till it was over, and then rose up, and took her leave, saying, she was obliged to go home, and
write

write some letters. — As none of them had any equipage there, a hackney coach was ordered to be called, and Mr. Truworth offering to accompany her, Sir Basil, on waiting on them down stairs, said to him some merry things on the occasion, which, though Miss Betsy did not comprehend, her lover understood the meaning of but too well for his peace of mind.



C H A P. IX.

Is yet more interesting than the former.

ANY one may judge what a heart, possessed of so sincere and honourable a flame, as that of Mr. Truworth's, must feel, to see the beloved object so intimate with a common prostitute : it shall suffice therefore to say, that his anxieties were such as prevented him from being able to recover himself enough to speak to Miss Betsy on that subject, as he would do ; he forbore mentioning it at all, and said very little to her on any other, while they were in the coach, and having seen her safe into Mr. Goodman's house, took his leave, and went home, where he passed

fed a night of more vexation than he ever had before experienced.

Fain would he have found some excuse for Miss Betsey's conduct in this point, — fain would he have believed her innocent as she was lovely, but could not tell how to conceive there was a possibility for true virtue to take delight in the company of vice ; but were there even such a thing in nature, the shew of encouraging an infamous action, he knew not how to brook in a woman he intended to make his wife.

He now acknowledged the justice of his aunt's remonstrances ; and by what the levity of Miss Betsey made him at present endure, foresaw what his honour and his peace of mind must hereafter continually endure, if he should once become a husband : — never were thoughts so divided, — so fluctuating as his ; — his good understanding, and jealousy of honour, convinced him there could be no lasting happiness with a person of Miss Betsey's temper ; but then the passion he had for her, flattered him with the hopes, that as all the faults she was guilty of, sprung rather from want of consideration than design, she might be reasoned out of them, when once he had gained so far upon

in her affections, as to find he might have the liberty of painting them to her their proper colours.

He often asked himself the question, whether he could be able to break with or not; and finding by the pangs which the very idea of an utter separation inflicted on him, that he could not, he had no other measures to take than to submit with patience, — to appear satisfied with every thing that pleased her, and to contrive all the methods he could, without her perceiving he did so, of stealing, by gentle degrees, into her mind, a relish of such things as were unbecoming in her.

He had but just rose from a bed, which that night had afforded him but little repose, when he was told Sir Basil Mowbray, to whom he had given his directions the day before, was come to wait on him. — Mr. Truworth was very glad of it, being impatient to undeceive him in the opinion he found he had entertained of Miss Betsy. They had not been three minutes together before she gave him an opportunity, by some tedious interrogatories concerning the infatigations of the past night, and among the rest, after looking round the room,

asked him, how he had disposed of his pretty Betsy? To all which Mr. Truworth replied, with a very serious air, “ Sir Basil, though I must own there are
 “ many appearances to justify your mistake, yet, I hope, my word and honour
 “ will out-balance them. — I do assure
 “ you, sir, that lady, whom you think
 “ and speak so lightly of, is a woman of
 “ fortune, family, and reputation.” —
 “ I am sorry then,” said Sir Basil, very
 “ much surprised, “ I treated her in the
 “ manner I did. — My Nancy, indeed,”
 continued he, meaning Miss Forward,
 “ told me she was virtuous, but I did not
 “ regard what she said on that score; —
 “ I know it is a trick among them to
 “ set off one another, to draw in us men:
 “ — but prithee, dear Charles, are you
 “ in earnest? ” — Mr. Truworth then,
 “ after having made a second affirmation
 “ tion that he was sincere in what he said,
 proceeded to give him some account of
 Miss Betsy’s family, circumstances, and
 manner of life; adding, that nothing
 could be more surprising to him, than to
 have met her in that place; — “ but, said
 “ he, she must certainly be unacquainted
 “ with the character of the woman she
 “ came to visit.”

“ Such

“ Such a thing might possibly happen,
 “ replied Sir Basil, and I think you would
 “ do well to give her a hint of it ” —
 “ Doubtless, cried the other, I am doubly
 “ bound so to do, first by my own ho-
 “ nour, and next by the friendship I have
 “ for some of her kindred.” — No far-
 ther discourse passed between them on this
 score, and the remaining time they were
 together being taken up on matters alto-
 gether foreign to the business of this his-
 tory, there is no occasion for making any
 mention of it.

Sir Basil staid so long, that when he
 had taken his leave, it was too late for
 Mr. Truworth to make a morning visit
 to Miss Betsy, as he intended to have
 done, so was obliged to defer it 'till the
 afternoon, though since his first acquaint-
 ance with her, he never had felt more im-
 patience to see her.

As he had much in his head to say
 to her, on the subject of the preceding
 day, he went as soon as he thought din-
 ner was entirely over at Mr. Good-
 man's, in order to have an opportunity
 of talking with her, before any other
 company came in : — she was then in her
 chamber dressing, but he waited not long

before she came down, and appeared more lovely and dazzling in his eyes than ever. — This happened to be the first day of her putting on a very rich, and extremely well-fancied gown, and either because it was more becoming than any of those he had seen her in before, or because of the pleasure ladies of her age and humour generally feel on such occasions, a more than usual brightness shone in her eyes, and was diffused through all her air; and after having made her some compliments on the elegance of her taste in dress, “I suppose, madam, said he, thus set forth, and equipped for conquest, you do not mean to stay at home this evening.” — “No, indeed,” replied she, “I am told there is a new tragedy to be acted to-night at Lincoln’s-Inn-fields, and I would not for the world miss the first night of a new play.”

On this, Mr. Truworth asked if he might have leave to wait upon her there? — “With all my heart, answered she, none of the gentlemen of my acquaintance know any thing of my going, so could not offer to gallant me, and there is only one lady goes with me.” — “Miss Mabel, I guess,” cried Mr. Truworth. — “No, answer’d Miss Betty, the

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“ she is engaged to the other house to-
“ night, so I sent to desire the favour of
“ that lady you saw me with last night,
“ to give me her company.”

“ You will have more, if you have
“ her’s, I doubt not,” said he; “ but
“ sure, madam, you cannot think of be-
“ ing seen with a woman of her fame,
“ in a place so public as the playhouse.”
— Miss Betsy was astonished to hear him
speak in this manner, and demanded of
him, in somewhat of a haughty tone,
what it was he meant? “ First, madam,”
resumed Mr. Truworth, “ give me leave
“ to ask you, how long since, and by
“ what accident, your intimacy with this
“ woman commenced?” — Though your
“ interrogatories, replied she, are made in
“ such a manner as might well excuse
“ me from answering them, yet for once
“ I may give you the satisfaction you
“ desire: — Miss Forward and I were
“ together at the boarding-school, —
“ we mutually took a liking to each
“ other, I believe from a parity of hu-
“ mours and inclinations, and since her
“ coming to London, have renewed that
“ friendship we began in our more tender
“ years.”

“ Friendships begun in childhood,
 “ madam,” answered he with a very
 “ grave air, “ ought to be continued or
 “ broke off, according as the parties per-
 “ severe in innocence, or degenerate into
 “ vice and infamy. — This caution ought
 “ to be more peculiarly observed in per-
 “ sons of your sex, as reputation in you
 “ once lost, is never to be retrieved. —
 “ Remember, madam, what your favou-
 “ rite author, Mr. Rowe, says on this
 “ occasion :

“ In vain with tears the loss she may deplore;
 “ In vain look back to what she was before,
 “ She sets, like stars that fall, to rise no more.”

Miss Betsy was so piqued at these re-
 monstrances, that she had scarce patience
 to contain herself 'till he had given over
 speaking, “ Goodlack, cried she, how
 “ sententious you are grown! — but, I
 “ hope, you have not the insolence to
 “ imagine I am guilty of any thing that
 “ might justly call my reputation in
 “ question?” — “ No, madam, replied he,
 “ far be it from me to suspect you of
 “ any thoughts, but such as might be-
 “ come the purity of angels; — but the
 “ more

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“ more bright you are, the more should
“ we lament to see the native lustre of
“ your mind clouded and blemished by
“ the faults of others. — Permit me, ma-
“ dam, to tell you, that to continue an
“ intimacy with a woman of Miss For-
“ ward’s character, must infallibly draw
“ you into inconveniencies, which you
“ want but to foresee to tremble at.”

“ If you have the affection for me you
“ pretend,” said she haughtily, “ and
“ could foresee the aversion I have to a
“ censorious temper, it is yourself would
“ have cause to tremble. — I love Miss
“ Forward, and neither know, nor will
“ believe, any ill of her. — Whenever I
“ am convinced that she is unworthy of
“ my friendship, it must be by her own
“ actions, not by the report of others. —
“ Therefore, Mr. Trueworth, if you
“ desire to continue on good terms with
“ me, you must forbear to interfere with
“ what company I keep, nor pretend to
“ prescribe rules for my conduct; at
“ least ’till you have more right to do
“ so.”

“ I shall never, madam, presume to
“ prescribe,” replied he; “ but shall al-
“ ways think it my duty to advise you,

“ in a matter, which so nearly concerns,
 “ not only yourself, but all who have any
 “ relation to you, either by blood or af-
 “ fection.” — Though these words, as
 well as all he had said on this occasion,
 were uttered in the most respectful accents,
 yet Miss Betsey was not able to imagine
 the least contradiction suited with the
 character of a lover, was offended beyond
 all measure; — she frowned, — rose hastily
 from her chair, — walked about the room
 in a disordered motion, — told him, the
 nature of the acquaintance between them
 did not authorise the liberties he took, —
 that she would not bear it, and desired,
 that he would either leave her, or change
 the conversation to somewhat more agree-
 able.

Mr. Trueworth, who as yet had said
 little, in comparison with what he in-
 tended to say on this subject, was so much
 shocked at the impossibility he found of
 engaging her attention, that for some
 time he was incapable of speaking one
 word. — During this pause a servant
 presented a letter to Miss Betsey. — “ O !”
 cried she as soon as she looked on the
 superscription, “ It is from my dear Miss
 “ Forward; — I hope nothing has hap-
 “ pened to prevent her going with me
 “ to the play.” — She made this excla-
 “ mation

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 107

mation merely to vex Mr. Truworth, and for that purpose also, read the billet loud enough for him to hear what it contained, which was as follows:

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

" My dear Miss Betsy,

" SINCE I received your message, I
" got a person to secure places for us in
" the box, so we need not go till six
" o'clock; but I am quite alone, and if
" you are disengaged should be glad you
" would come directly to her, who is ever,

£ With the most perfect amity,

" My dear Miss Betsy,

" Your very much obliged,

" And humble servant,

" A. FORWARD."

" Bid the messenger," said Miss Betsy
to the servant, " tell the lady that I will
" wait upon her this moment,—and then
" call me a chair. — I must comply with
" the summons I have just received," said
she, turning to Mr. Truworth, " so you
" must excuse my leaving you, for I will
" not strain your complaisance to accom-

“pany me where I am going; but shall
 “be glad to see you when you are in a
 “better humour.”

“I am ready, madam, to attend you
 “any where, said Mr. Trueworth, even
 “to Miss Forward’s, — and will pass the
 “whole evening with you, if you please,
 “in her apartment; — but, I beseech
 “you, do not think of going to the play,
 “with a woman of her class; — do not
 “expose yourself in a place where so
 “many eyes will be upon you: — reflect,
 “for heaven’s sake, what your modesty
 “will suffer, in seeing yourself gazed and
 “pointed at, by those to whom she sells
 “her favours; — and reflect yet farther,
 “what they will judge of you.” — “You
 “grow scurrilous, sir,” cried she, ready
 to burst with passion, “I will hear no
 “more.” — Then running to the door,
 asked if the chair was come, and being
 told it was, “Farewell, sir,” said she, as
 she was going into it, “when I want a spy
 “to inspect, or a governor to direct my
 “actions, the choice, perhaps, may fall
 “on you.”

Mr. Trueworth, who, at this treatment,
 was not quite master of himself, retorted,
 with some warmth, and loud enough to
 be heard by her, as the chairmen were
 carrying

carrying her to the steps of the house, “The choice, madam, perhaps, may not be yours to make.”—With these words he went hastily away, half resolving in his mind never to see her more.



CHAP. X.

Cannot fail of exciting compassion in some readers, though it may move others to laughter.

THE few remonstrances Miss Betsy would vouchsafe to listen to from Mr. Truworth, had a much greater effect upon her mind, than her pride, and the excessive homage she expected from her lovers, would suffer to make shew of, or than he himself imagined.—She had too much discernment, heedless as she was, not to know he was above any little malicious inuendos; but, on the contrary, was extremely cautious in regard to the character of whomsoever he spoke:—she feared therefore he had but too good grounds for the uneasiness he express'd, for her continuing a correspondence with Miss Forward;—she knew that she had been faulty, and could not be assured she was not still so; and it was more owing
to

THE HISTORY OF

to her impatience to be ascertained of the truth, than to any real resentment she had conceived against Mr. Truworth, that she complied with the invitation of her now suspected friend, and resolved to put the question home to her, concerning her present manner of life, and the means by which she was supported: — She had found her removed from the lowest degree of penury and wretchedness into a state, equal to what she could have been mistress of, had she been re-established in the favour of her father; and now, for the first time, began to think it strange she should be so, from the mere bounty of a distant relation, to whom in her utmost distress she had never applied, nor even once mentioned in the recital of her melancholy history: ——— I
 “ will talk to her, said she to herself,
 “ watch carefully, not only the replies
 “ she makes to what I say, but also her
 “ very looks, unperceiving my suspi-
 “ cions, and if I find the least room to
 “ believe what Mr. Truworth has infi-
 “ nuated, shall pity, but will never see
 “ her more.”

In this prudent disposition did she enter the lodgings of Miss Forward, but had no opportunity for the execution of her purpose; — some company, which she herself

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. III

herself thought, by their behaviour, to be not of the best sort, happening to be just come before her, and departed not 'till it was time to go to the play. — Miss Betsy was more than once about to tell Miss Forward, that she had changed her mind, and would not go; but her complaisance, as having been the person who made the first proposal, as often stopped her mouth.

In fine, they went, but the house being very full, and the fellow, who had been sent to keep places for them, going somewhat too late, they were obliged to content themselves with sitting in the third row. — This, at another time, would have been a matter of some mortification to Miss Betsy; but in the humour she now was, to shew herself was the least of her care. — Never had she entered any place of public entertainment with so little satisfaction; — Mr. Trueworth's words ran very much in her mind: — she had lost no part of them, and though she could not bring herself to approve of the freedom he had taken, yet, in her heart, she could not forbear confessing, that his admonitions testified the most zealous and tender care for her reputation; and if given by any one, except a lover, would have

have demanded more of her thanks than her resentment.

But, alas! those serious considerations were but of short duration:—the brilliant audience, — the music, — the moving scenes exhibited on the stage, and above all the gallantries with which herself and Miss Forward were treated, by several gay young gentlemen, who, between the acts, presented them with fruits and sweetmeats; soon dissipated all those reflections, which it was so much her interest to have cherished, and she once more relapsed into her former self.

Towards the end of the play, there were two rakes of distinction, that stuck very close to them, and when it was ended, took the liberty to invite them to sup at a tavern; — Miss Betsy started at the motion, but was very well pleased to find Miss Forward shewed an equal dislike to it. — “ You will give us leave then, ” cried one of the gentlemen, to guard “ you safe home, ladies? ” — “ That I think, my dear, said Miss Forward to “ Miss Betsy, may be granted, for the “ sake of being protected from the insults “ of those, who may know less how to “ behave towards our sex.”

Miss

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Miss Betsy making no opposition, they all four went into a hackney coach to Miss Forward's lodgings, it being agreed upon between them, that Miss Betsy should be set down there, and take a chair from thence to Mr. Goodman's.—Nothing indecent, nor that could be any way shocking to the most strict modesty, being offered during their passage, on their alighting from the coach at Mr. Screener's door, Miss Forward thought, that to ask them to come in would incur no censure from her fair friend, as they had behaved with so much civility and complaisance;—accordingly she did so, and they, who expected no less, took each man his lady by the hand, and immediately tript up stairs.

Miss Betsy did not presently make any offer to go home, because she thought it would appear very odd in her to leave her companion with two strange gentlemen.—She little guess'd the designs they had in their heads, and doubted not but they would soon take leave:—she did not, however, continue in this mistake for many minutes; for one of them drawing Miss Forward to a window, in order to speak to her with more privacy, the other, that he might have the better opportunity

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portunity to do so, address'd himself to Miss Betsey, — "How killing handsome you are, said he, taking her by both her hands, and looking full in her face, "What a pity it is you did not shine in the front to-night? By my soul you would have out dazzled all the titled prudes about you."

"Pish, replied she, I went to see the play, not to be seen myself." — Not to be seen!" cried he, why then have you taken all this pains to empty the whole quiver of Cupid's arrows to new point those charms you have received from nature? — Why does the jessamine and the blooming violet play wanton in your hair? — Why is the patch with so much art placed on the corner of this ruby lip, — and here another to mark out the arched symmetry of the jetty brow? — Why does the glittering solitaire hang pendant on the snowy breast, but to attract, and allure us poor admiring men, into a pleasing ruin?"

Miss Betsey answer'd this railery in its kind, and as she had a great deal of ready wit, would soon perhaps, had the same strain continued, have left the beau nothing to say for himself; but Miss Forward,

ward and the other gentleman having finish'd what they had to say, coming towards them, put an end to it. — “What do you think, cried Miss Forward, this gentleman swears he won't go out of the house 'till I give him leave to send for a supper?” — “You may do as you please, said Miss Betsy, but I must be excused from staying to partake of it.” — Whether she was really in earnest or not, is not very material; but her refusal was looked upon only as a feint, and they pret's'd her to tarry in such a manner, as she could not well avoid complying, even though she had been more averse, in effect, than for some time she pretended to be.

The conversation was extremely lively, and though sprinkled with some double entendres, could not be said to have any thing indecent, or that could raise a blush in the faces of women who were accustomed to much company. — Miss Betsy had her share in all the innocent part of what was said, and laughed at that which was less so. — But not to dwell on trifles, she forgot all the cautions given her by Mr. Truworth, — considering not that she was in company with two strange gentlemen, and of a woman whose character was suspected; and though she had a watch
by

by her side, regarded not how the hours pass'd on, 'till she heard the nightly monitor of time, cry, " Past twelve o'clock, " and a cloudy morning."

After this she would not be prevailed upon to stay, and desired Miss Forward to send somebody for a chair. — " A chair, " madam, cried that gentleman, who, of the two, had been most particular in his addresses to her, " you cannot sure imagine we should suffer you to go home alone at this late hour." — " I apprehend no great danger, said she, though " I confess it is a thing I have not been " accustomed to." — He replied, " That " in his company she should not begin " the experiment." On this a coach was ordered. Miss Betsy made some few scruples at committing herself to the conduct of a person so little known to her. — " All acquaintance must have a beginning, " said he; the most intimate friends were " perfect strangers at first. You may " depend on it, I am a man of honour, " and cannot be capable of an ungenerous action."

Little more was said on the occasion, and being told a coach was at the door, they took leave of Miss Forward, and the other gentleman, and went down stairs.

On

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—On stepping into the coach, Miss Betsy directed the man where to drive; but the gentleman, unheard by her, ordered him to go to the bagnio in Orange-street. — They were no sooner seated, and the windows drawn up, to keep out the cold, than Miss Betsy was alarmed with a treatment, which her want of consideration made her little expect. — Since the gentleman commoner, at Oxford, no man had ever attempted to take the liberties which her present companion now did; — she struggled, — she repelled with all her might, the insolent pressures of his lips and hands. — “Is this, cried she, “the honour I was to depend upon? — “It is thus you prove yourself incapable “of an ungenerous action?” — Accuse “me not, said he, till you have reason. “—— I have been bit once, and “have made a vow never to settle upon “any woman while I live again; — but “you shall fare never the worse for that, “—I will make you a handsome present “before we part, and if you can be constant will allow you six guineas a “week.”

She was so confounded at the first mention of this impudent proposal, that she had not the power of interrupting him; but recovering herself, as well as she was able,

able, "Heavens! cried she, what means
 "all this?—What do you take me for?"
 "— Take you for, answered he laugh-
 "ing, prithee dear girl, no more of
 "these airs: — I take you for a pretty,
 "— kind obliging creature, and such
 "I hope to find you, as soon as we come
 "into a proper place. ——— In the
 "mean time, continued he, stopping her
 "mouth with kisses, none of this affected
 "coyness."

The fright she was in, aided by disdain
 and rage, now inspired her with an un-
 usual strength: — she broke from him,
 thrust down the window, — and with one
 breath called him monster, — villain, —
 with the next screamed out to the coach-
 man to stop, and finding he regarded not
 her cries, would have thrown herself out,
 if not forcibly with-held by the gentle-
 man, who began now to be a little startled
 at her resolute behaviour, — "What is
 "all this for? said he. — Would you
 "break your neck, or venture being
 "crushed to pieces by the wheels?" —
 "Any thing, cried she, bursting into
 "tears, I will venture, suffer any thing,
 "rather than be subjected to insults, such
 "as you have dared to treat me with."

Though

Though the person by whom Miss Betsy was thus dangerously attacked was a libertine, or, according to the more genteel and modish phrase, a man of pleasure, yet he wanted neither honour, nor good sense: — he had looked on Miss Betsy as a woman of the town, by seeing her with one who was so; and her too great freedom in conversation, gave him no cause to alter his opinion: but the manner in which she had endeavoured to rebuff his more near approaches, greatly staggered him: ————— he knew not what to think, but remained in silent cogitation for some minutes, and though he held her fast clasped round the waist, it was only to prevent her from attempting the violence she had threatened, not to offer any towards her: — “Is it possible,” said he, after this pause, that you are “virtuous?” — “I call Heaven to witness,” answered she, with a voice faltering, through the excess of terror and indignation, “that I never have entertained one thought that was not strictly so; — that I detest and scorn those “wretched creatures of the number of “whom you imagine me to be one; and “that I would sooner die the worst of “deaths, than live with infamy. — Yes, “sir, be assured, continued she, gathering

ing more courage, “that whatever appearances may be this fatal night against me, I am of a family of some consideration in the world, and am blest with fortune, which sets me above the low temptations of designing men.”

As she had ended these words, they came to the bagnio, and the coach immediately stopping, two or three waiters came running to open the door, on which Miss Betsy, more terrified than ever shrieked in a most piteous manner, “God! cried she, — What’s here? — Where am I? — What will become of me?” and at that instant recollected that no help was near; — that she was in the power of a man, whose aim was her eternal ruin; — and that it was by her own indiscretion alone, this mischief had fallen on her, was overcome with the dread, — the shame, — the horror, as she then supposed, of her inevitable fate that she was very near falling into a swoon.

The gentleman discovering, by the light of the lamps at the bagnio door the condition she was in, was truly touched with it. — “Retire; said he, hastily to the fellows, “we do not want you.” — Then throwing himself on his knees before

before her, " Let this posture, madam, continued he " obtain your pardon, and " at the same time ease you of all apprehensions on my score." — " May I believe you ?" said she still weeping. — " You may," replied he ; then rising, and placing himself on the seat opposite to her, — " I love my pleasures, and " think it no crime to indulge the appetites of nature. — I am charmed with " the kind free woman, but I honour and " revere the truly virtuous ; and it is a " maxim with me never to attempt the " violation of innocence. — These, madam, are my principles in regard to " your sex ;—but to convince you further ; " — Here, fellow," continued he to the coachman, who was walking backwards and forwards at some distance, " get up " upon your box, and drive where you " were first directed."

Miss Betsy acknowledged the generosity of this behaviour ; and on his asking by what accident it had happened, that he found her in company with a woman of Miss Forward's character, she told him ingenuously the truth, — that they knew each other when children in the country ; but that she had not seen her more than three times since their coming to London,

and was entirely ignorant of her conduct from that time.

He then took the liberty of reminding her, that a young lady more endangered her reputation, by an acquaintance with one woman of ill fame, than by receiving the visits of twenty men, though professed libertines. — To which she replied, that for the future she would be very careful what company she kept of both sexes.

This was the sum of the conversation that pass'd between them during their last stage to Mr. Goodman's, where being safely arrived, after having seen her within the doors, he saluted her with a great deal of respect, and took his leave.



C H A P. XI.

Shews what effects the transactions of the preceding night had on the minds of Miss Betsy and Mr. Trueworth.

MR. Goodman and Lady Mellasin were gone to bed when Miss Betsy came home ; but Miss Flora sat up for her, in complaisance, as she pretended, but in reality to see who it was came home with her. — This malicious creature had been extremely fawning for some days past, to Miss Betsy, but this night was more so than usual, doubtless in the hope of being able to draw something out of her, which her cruel wit might turn to her disadvantage ; but the other knew too well the disposition she had towards her, to communicate any thing to her, which she would not wish should be made public.

Never did any one pass a night in greater inquietudes than this young lady sustain'd ; and she felt them the more terribly, as she had no friend to whom pride and shame would suffer her to impart the cause ; — she look'd back with horror on

the precipice she had fallen into, and considered it as a kind of miracle, that she had recovered from it unhurt;— she could not reflect on what had passed, that by the levity of her conduct she had been thought a common prostitute, had been treated as such, and preserved from irrecoverable ruin, by the meer mercy of a man who was a perfect stranger to her; without feeling anew that confusion, which the most shocking moments of her distress inflicted. — The most bitter of her enemies could not have passed censures more severe than she did on herself, and in this fit of humiliation, and repentance, would even have asked Mr. Truworth pardon for the little regard she had paid to his advice.

The agitations of her mind would not suffer her to take one moment of repose for the whole night, nor did the morning afford any more tranquility: — the disturbance of her heart flew up into her head, and occasioned so violent a pain there, that she was as unable as unwilling to get out of bed.— She lay 'till some hours after the time in which they usually breakfasted, nor would take any refreshment, though the tea was brought to her bedside. — Amongst the crowd of tormenting ideas, the remembrance, that she owed
all

all the vexation she laboured under entirely to the acquaintance she had with Miss Forward, came strong into her thoughts, and she had not rose the whole day if not moved to it by the impatience of venting her spleen on that unfortunate woman, which she did, in a letter to her, containing these lines :

TO MISS FORWARD.

‘ I AM sorry that the compassion,
 ‘ which your feigned contrition for one
 ‘ false step obliged me to take in your
 ‘ misfortunes, should make you imagine
 ‘ I would continue any conversation with
 ‘ you, after knowing you had abandoned
 ‘ yourself to a course of life, which I blush
 ‘ to think any of my sex can descend to
 ‘ brook the thoughts of. much more to
 ‘ be guilty of. — If you had retained the
 ‘ least spark of generosity, or good-will
 ‘ towards me, you would rather have
 ‘ avoided than coveted my company, as
 ‘ you must be sensible, that to be seen with
 ‘ you must render me in some measure
 ‘ partaker of your infamy, though wholly
 ‘ innocent of your crimes. — How base,
 ‘ — how cruel is such behaviour, espe-
 ‘ cially to one, who had a real regard for
 ‘ you, even after you had confessed your-
 ‘ self unworthy of it ; — but I have been

‘ often told, and now I find the observa-
 ‘ tion just, that women of your wretched
 ‘ principles, being lost to all hope of hap-
 ‘ piness themselves, take a malicious
 ‘ pleasure in endeavouring to destroy it in
 ‘ others.

‘ But, for heaven’s sake, what could
 ‘ induce you to desire a continuation of
 ‘ a correspondence with me? — What
 ‘ did you take me for? — Did you imagine
 ‘ me so blind, as not to see into the
 ‘ shameful means by which you are sup-
 ‘ ported, or so weak as to forfeit all
 ‘ the reputation and respect I have in the
 ‘ world, merely to comply with your re-
 ‘ quest? — No! — your conduct is too
 ‘ bare-faced, to give me even the shadow
 ‘ of an excuse for ever seeing you again;
 ‘ — do not, therefore, go about to varnish
 ‘ over actions, whose foulness will appear
 ‘ through all the colours you can daub
 ‘ them with. — The friendship I once had
 ‘ for you has already pleaded all that
 ‘ yourself could urge in your defence,
 ‘ but the cause is too bad, and I must
 ‘ leave you to the miseries which attend
 ‘ remorse, and which a little time will
 ‘ infallibly bring on. — Heavens! to be
 ‘ a common prostitute! — To earn pre-
 ‘ carious bread, by being the slave of
 ‘ every man’s licentious will. — What is
 ‘ digging

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‘ digging in the mines!—What is begging!—What is starving when compar’d to this! — But the idea is too shocking. — Modesty shudders at it. — I shall drive both that and you as distant from my thoughts as possible ; so be assured this is the last time you will ever hear from the

‘ Much deceived,

‘ And ill-treated,

‘ B. THOUGHTLESS.’

She was going to seal up the above letter, when a sudden thought coming into her head, she added, to what she had already wrote, this postscript :

‘ P.S. You may perhaps be instigated to answer this, either through resentment for the reproaches it contains, or through some remains of modesty, to attempt an apology for the occasion : but I would not wish you should give yourself that trouble, for be assured I shall read nothing that comes from you, and that whatever you send, will be returned to you again unopened.’

She immediately sent this away by a porter, and having satisfied the dictates of her indignation against Miss Forward, she had now done with her, and resolved to think of her no more ; — yet was the confusion of her mind far from being dissipated. — “ What will Mr. Trueworth say, ” cried she to herself, “ if ever the ridiculous adventure of last night should reach his ears, as nothing is more probable, than that it may ? — What will my brother Frank say, on hearing such a story ? — What will Mr. Goodman and Lady Mellasin say ? — What a triumph for the envious Miss Flora ? — And what can I answer for myself, either to my friends, or enemies ? ”

Little care as this young lady had seemed to have taken of her reputation, it was notwithstanding very dear to her. — Honour was yet still more dear, and she could not reflect, that what she had done might call the one in question, and how near she had been to having the other irrecoverably lost, without feeling the most bitter agonies ; she was not able to dress, or go down stairs that day, and gave orders to be denied to whoever should come to visit her.

In

In this perplexed situation of mind let us leave her for a while and see with what sort of temper Mr. Truworth behaved, after having seen her go to the very woman he had so much conjured her to avoid.

All the love he had for her, would not keep him from resenting this last rebuff; — he thought he had not deserved such usage, nor that his having professed himself her lover, gave her the privilege of treating him as her slave: — the humour he was in making him unfit for company, he went directly to his lodgings; but had not been long there before it came into his head, that possibly the manner in which she had behaved was only a fit of contradiction, and that, after all, she might, when she was out of hearing, have given counter-orders to the chairmen, and was neither gone to Miss Forward's, nor would accompany her to the play.—With such vain imaginations does love sometimes flatter its votaries, and the sincere and ardent flame, which filled the heart of Mr. Truworth, made him greedily catch at every supposition, in favour of the darling object.

Willing, however, to be more assured, he bethought himself of a stratagem, which would either relieve all the doubts remaining in him of her obstinacy, or convince him they were but too just : — he sent immediately to his barber for a black perriwig, and muffled up in a cloak, so as to render it almost an impossibility for him to be known by any one, went to the theatre, and with a heart divided betwixt hope and fear, placed himself in a part of the middle gallery, which had the full command of more than half the boxes ; — he saw a very brilliant circle, but not the whom he so much dreaded to find, shine among them.

Having scrutinously examined all within the reach of his view, he quitted his present post, and removed to the other side of the house, where he soon discovered the persons he came in search of : — he saw Miss Forward earnest in discourse with a gentleman that sat behind her, and Miss Betsy receiving fruit from another, with the same freedom and gaiety of deportment she could have done, if presented by himself ; — he saw the nods, — the winks, — and the grimaces, which several in the pit made to each other, when looking towards these two ladies, —
every

every moment brought with it some fresh matter for his mortification, yet would not his curiosity stop here. — When the play was ended, he went hastily down stairs, and mingled with the crowd that stood about the door, in hopes of seeing Miss Betsy quit her company, take a chair, and go home; — but how cruel a stab was it to a man, who loved as he did, to find her go with a dissolute companion and two gentlemen, who, he had reason to believe, by the little he saw of their behaviour, were utter strangers to her, in a hackney coach; — he was once about to appear himself through his disguise, and tell Miss Betsy, that he thought he had more right to the honour of conducting her, than those to whom she gave permission, but the greatness of his spirit assisted his prudence in restraining him from so rash an action.

After this sight, it is not in the power of words to represent what it was he felt. Reason was too weak to combat against the force of such various emotions as for a time had the entire possession of his soul: — thought Miss Betsy unworthy of his love, yet still he loved her; and had she been witness of his present distracted state, she would have seen the power she had over him, no less manifest

in the moments of his rage, than in those in which he had behaved with the greatest tenderness and respect.

His good sense, however, at last convinced him that as no solid happiness could be expected with a woman of Miss Betsey's temper, he ought to conquer his passion for her. — This he resolved to attempt, yet thought before he did so, it would become him to see her once more, to argue gently with her, and to try, at least, if there were not a possibility of making her see the errors she was guilty of.

With this intent he went the next day to visit her, but being told she could see no company that day, was going from the door, when Miss Flora, who had watched for him at the parlour window, came and desired him to walk in; — his complaisance would not permit him to refuse her request, and after the usual compliments, said, he was sorry Miss Betsey was so ill. — “You need not be in much pain,” replied she, with a look which he thought had more than an ordinary meaning in it, “she is not greatly indisposed” — — “Perhaps,” cried Mr. Truworth, with some warmth, “she is only so to me.” — “I cannot
„say

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“ say any thing to that, returned Miss
“ Flora, but her orders were in general
“ to all that came ; and I believe, in-
“ deed, she is not perfectly well ; — she
“ came home extremely late last night,
“ and seemed in a good deal of disorder.”
— “ Disorder, madam, interrupted Mr.
Trueworth, impatiently, “ for Heaven’s
“ sake, on what occasion ?” — “ I wish
“ I could inform you, answered she, but
“ at present I am not favoured with her
“ confidence, though there was a time,
“ when I was made partaker of her dearest
“ secrets : — I wish those she now intrusts
“ them with, may be no less faithful to
“ her than I have been.” — “ I hope, said
“ he, she has none which to be betrayed
“ in would give her pain.” — With these
words he rose up to go away, — Miss Flora
sain would have persuaded him to drink
tea ; but he excused himself, saying, he
was engaged, — that he came only to en-
quire after the health of her fair friend,
and could not have staid, if so happy as
to have seen her.

Scarce could this passionate lover con-
tain himself, ’till he got out of the house :
— the manner in which Miss Flora had
spoke of Miss Betsy, added fresh fuel to
the jealousies he was before possessed of ;
but how great soever his disturbance was,
he

he found on his return home somewhat which made all he had known before seem light and trifling.



CHAP. XII.

Contains some passages, which, it is probable, will afford more pain than pleasure, yet are very pertinent to the history, and necessary to be related.

THOUGH the words which Miss Flora had let fall to Mr. Trueworth concerning Miss Betsy, seemed as if spoken by mere chance, there was couched under them, a design of the most black and villainous kind, that ever entered the breast of woman, as will presently appear to the astonishment of every reader.

In order to do this, we must relate an incident in Miss Betsy's life, not hitherto mentioned, and which happened some little time before her going to Oxford, with her brother Frank.

On her first coming to town, a woman had been recommended to her for starching,

ding, and making up her fine linnen :— this person she had ever since employed, and took a great fancy to, as she found her honest, industrious, and very obliging. — The poor creature was unhappily married, — her husband was gone from her, and had lifted himself for a soldier ; — being born in a distant county, she had no relations to whom she could apply for assistance, — was big with child, and had no support but the labour of her hands. — These calamitous circumstances so much touched the commiserative nature of Miss Betsy, that she frequently gave her double the sum she demanded for her work, besides bestowing on her many things she left off wearing, which, though trifles in themselves, were very helpful to a person in such distress.

Miss Mabel, for whom she also worked at the same time, was no less her patroness than Miss Betsy. — In fine, they were both extremely kind to her, in so much as made her often cry out, in a transport of gratitude, that these two good young ladies were worth to her all the customers she had besides. — They continued to prove themselves so, indeed ; for when her child was born, which happened to be a girl, they stood god-mothers, and not only gave handsomely them-

themselves, but raised a contribution among their acquaintance, for the support of the lying in woman and her infant; the former, however, did not long enjoy the blessing of two such worthy friends, — she died before the expiration of her month, and the latter being wholly destitute, was about to be thrown upon the parish: — some well-disposed neighbour, who knew how kind Miss Mabel and Miss Betsey had been, came and acquainted them with the melancholy story; — they consulted together, and each reflecting, that she had undertaken the protection of this infant at the font thought herself bound by duty to preserve it from those hardships with which children thus exposed are sometimes treated: — they, therefore, as they were equally engaged, agreed to join equally in the maintenance of this innocent forlorn.

This was a rare charity indeed, and few there are, especially at their years, who so justly consider the obligations of a baptismal covenant. — It was also the more to be admired, as neither of them had the incomes of their fortunes in their own hands, the one being under guardianship, and the other at the allowance of a father, who, though rich, was extremely avaritious.

As

As they were therefore obliged to be good œconomists in this point, and nurses in the country are to be had at a much cheaper rate than in town, they got a person to seek out for one, who would not be unreasonable in her demands, and at the same time do justice to her charge.—Such a one, according to the character given of her by neighbours, being found, the child decently cloathed, was sent down to her habitation, which was in a little village about seventeen miles from London.—For the sake of concealing the part Miss Mabel had in this affair from the knowledge of her father, it was judged proper that Miss Betsy should seem to take the whole upon herself, which she did, and the nurse's husband came up every month, and received the money from her hands, as also whatever other necessaries the child wanted.

Who would imagine that such a glorious act of benevolence should ever be made a handle to traduce and vilify the author?—yet what cannot malice, accompanied with cunning, do! — It can give the fairest virtue the appearance of the foulest vice, and pervert the just estimation of the world into a mistaken scorn and contempt.

Miss

Miss Flora, after receiving the disappointment, as related in the sixth chapter in this volume, was far from desisting from the wicked design she had conceived of putting an end to the intercourse between Miss Betsy and Mr. Trueworth.—Her fertile brain presented her with a thousand stratagems, which she rejected, either as they were too weak to accomplish what she wished, or too liable to discovery, 'till at last she hit upon the most detestable project of representing what proceeded from the noblest propensity of Miss Betsy's nature, as the effect of a criminal compulsion :—in fine, to make it appear so feasible, as to be believed, that the child who owed half its maintenance to her charity, was entirely kept by herself, and the offspring of her own body.

Having well weighed and deliberated on this matter, it seemed to her such as Mr. Trueworth, on the most strict examination, could not discover the deception of;—she therefore resolved to pursue it, and accordingly wrote the following letter :

To

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TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

S I R,

‘ THE friendship I had for some of
‘ your family, now deceased, and the
‘ respect due to your own character in
‘ particular, obliges me to acquaint you
‘ with truths more disagreeable than per-
‘ haps you ever yet have heard: — but
‘ before I proceed to the shocking nar-
‘ rative, let me conjure you to be-
‘ lieve, that in me your better angel
‘ speaks, and warns you to avoid that
‘ dreadful gulph of everlasting misery,
‘ into which you are just ready to be
‘ plunged.

‘ I am informed, by those who are most
‘ versed in your affairs, and on whose ve-
‘ racity I may depend, that a treaty of
‘ marriage is on foot, and almost as good
‘ as concluded, between you and Miss
‘ Betsy Thoughtless. — A young lady, I
‘ must confess, well descended, — hand-
‘ some, and endued with every accom-
‘ plishment to attract the admiration of
‘ mankind; and if her soul had the least
‘ conformity with her exterior charms,
‘ you, doubtless, might have been one of
‘ the most happy, and most envied man
‘ on earth; — but, sir, this seeming in-
‘ nocence

' nocence is all a cheat, — another has
 ' been before-hand with you, in the joys
 ' you covet; — your intended bride has
 ' been a mother without the pleasure of
 ' owning herself as such. The product of
 ' a shameful passion is still living, and
 ' though she uses the greatest caution in
 ' this affair, I have by accident discovered
 ' is now nursed at Denham, a small vil-
 ' lage, within two miles of Uxbridge, by
 ' a gardener's wife, who is called by the
 ' country people, Goody Bushman. — I
 ' give you this particular account, in
 ' order that you may make what enquiry
 ' you shall think proper into a fact, which
 ' I am sorry to say, you will find but too
 ' real. — I pity from my soul the un-
 ' fortunate seduced young lady, — she
 ' must be doubly miserable, if by having
 ' lost her virtue, she loses a husband
 ' such as you; — but if after this you
 ' should think fit to prosecute your pre-
 ' tensions, I wish she may endeavour, by
 ' her future conduct, to atone for the
 ' errors of the past; — but, alas! her
 ' present manner of behaviour affords no
 ' such promising expectations; and if you
 ' should set your honour and fortune, and
 ' all that is dear to you, against so pre-
 ' carious a stake, as the hope of reclaim-
 ' ing a woman of her temper, it must
 ' certainly fill all your friends with asto-
 ' nishment

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‘ nishment and grief;—but you are your-
‘ self the best judge of what it will be-
‘ come you to do, — I only beg, that
‘ you will be assured this intelligence
‘ comes from one, who is,

‘ With the utmost sincerity,

‘ S I R,

‘ Your well-wisher,

‘ And most humble,

‘ Though unknown, servant.”

She would not trust the success of the mischief she intended by this letter, ’till she had examined and re-examined every sentence, and finding it altogether such as she thought would work the desired effect, got one, who was always her ready agent in matters of this kind, to copy it over, in order to prevent any accident from discovering the real author, and then sent it as directed by the penny-post.

How far the event answered her expectations shall very shortly be related; but incidents of another nature, requiring to be first mentioned, the gratification of
that

that curiosity, which this may have excited, must for a while be deferred.



CHAP. XIII.

Is the recital of some accidents, as little possible to be foreseen by the reader, as they were by the persons, to whom they happened.

IN youth, when the blood runs high, and the spirits are in full vivacity, affliction must come very heavy indeed, when it makes any deep or lasting impression on the mind. — That vexation which Miss Betsey had brought upon herself, by going to the play with Miss Forward, was severe enough the whole night, and the ensuing day. — A great while, it must be confessed, for a person of her volatile disposition, and when the more violent emotions had subsided, the terror she had lately sustained, had, at least, this good effect upon her; it made her resolve to take all possible precautions not to fall into the like danger again. — As she had an infinite deal of generosity in her nature, when not obscured by that pride and vanity which the flatteries she had been but too much accustomed to, had

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had inspired her with, she could not reflect how ill she had treated Mr. Trueworth, and the little regard she had paid to the tender concern he had shewn for her reputation, without thinking she ought to ask his pardon, and acknowledge she had been in the wrong. — If Mr. Trueworth could have known the humour she was at present in, how readily would he have flown to her with all the wings of love and kind forgiveness; but as he had not the spirit of divination, and could only judge of her sentiments by her behaviour, it was not in his power to conceive how great a change had happened in his favour, through a just sensibility of her own error.

She, in the mean time, little imagined how far he resented the treatment she had given him, especially as she heard he had been to wait upon her the day in which she saw no company, and after having past a night of much more tranquility than the former had been, went down in the morning to breakfast, with her usual cheerfulness. — She had not been many minutes in the parlour, before she was agreeably surpris'd with the sight of her elder brother, Mr. Francis Thoughtless, who, it seems, had arriv'd the night before. — After the first welcomes were
over,

over, Mr. Goodman asked him, Wherefore he did not come directly to his house? saying he had always a spare bed to accommodate a friend: — To which the other replied, that he had come from Paris with some company, whom he could not quit, and that they had lain at the Hummums. — Miss Betsey was extremely transported at his return, and said a thousand obliging things to him, all which he answered with more politeness than tenderness; and this young lady soon perceived by this specimen of his behaviour to her, that she was not to expect the same affection from him, as she had received so many proofs of from her younger brother.

His long absence from England, and some attachments he had found abroad, had, indeed very much taken off that warmth of kindness he would, doubtless, otherwise have felt for an only sister, and one who appeared so worthy of his love. — As Mr. Goodman had acquainted him by letter, that he had hired a house for him,, according to his request, the chief of their conversation turned on that subject, and as soon as breakfast was over, they took a walk together to see it. — On their return he seemed very much pleased with the choice Mr. Goodman had made,

made, and the little time he staid was entirely taken up with consulting lady Mellasin, his sister, and Miss Flora, concerning the manner in which she should ornament it; for the honest guardian had taken care to provide all such furniture, as he thought would be necessary for a single gentleman.

No intreaties were wanting to prevail on him, to make that house his home, 'till his own was thoroughly aired, and in all respects fit for him to go into; but he excused himself, saying, he could not leave the friends he had travelled with, 'till they were provided for as well as himself; nor could all Mr. Goodman, and the ladies urge, persuade him to dine with them that day.

It must be acknowledged, that this positive refusal of every thing that was desired of him, had not in it all that complaisance, which might have been expected from a person just come from among a people more famous for their politeness than their sincerity.

But he had his own reasons, which the family of Mr. Goodman as yet were far from suspecting, which made him act in the manner he now did; and it was not,

in reality, the want of French breeding, but the want of true old English resolution, that enforced this seeming negligence and abruptness.

After he was gone, Mr. Goodman went to 'Change, but was scarce entered into the walk, where he had appointed to meet some merchants, when he was accosted by two rough ill-looking fellows, who demanded his sword, and told him, they had a writ against him, — that he was their prisoner, and must go with them.

Mr. Goodman, who had as little reason as any man living to suspect an insult of this nature, only smiled, and told them, they were mistaken in the person. — “No, no, said one of them, we are right enough, if you are Mr. Samuel Goodman,” — “My name is Samuel Goodman, replied he; “but I do not know that it stands in any man’s books for debt; —but pray, continued he, at whose suit am I arrested?” — “At the suit of Mr. Oliver Marplus, said the other officer. — I have no dealings with any such person, cried Mr. Goodman, nor even ever heard the name of him you mention.” — They then told him, it was his
his

his business to prove that, — they did but do their duty, and he must obey the writ. — Mr. Goodman on this, knowing they were not the persons with whom this matter should be contested, readily went where they conducted him, which was to a house belonging to him who appeared to be the principal of the two. — As they were coming off 'Change, he bad his coachman drive his chariot home, and tell his lady, that he believed he should not dine with her that day ; but he kept his footman with him, to send on what messages he should find convenient.

The officer, knowing his condition, and not doubting but he should have a handsome present for civility-money, used him with a great deal of respect, when he had got him into his house ; and, on his desiring to be informed of the lawyer's name, employed in the action, he immediately told him, and also for what sum he was arrested, which was no less than two thousand, five hundred, and seventy-five pounds, eight shillings, — “ A pretty parcel of money, truly, said Mr. Goodman, I wonder in what dream I contracted this debt.” — He then called for pen, ink, and paper, and wrote a line to his lawyer in the Temple, desiring him to go to the other, who, they said, was

concerned against him, and find out the truth of this affair

The honest old gentleman having sent this letter by his servant, called for something to eat, and was extremely facetious and pleasant with the officers, not doubting but that what had happened was occasioned through some mistake or other, and should immediately be discharged, when the thing was enquired into; — but his present good humour was changed into one altogether the reverse, when his own lawyer, accompanied by him who was engaged for his adversary, came to him, and told him there was no remedy but to give bail; — that the suit commenced against him, was on account of a bond given by Lady Mellasin to Mr. Oliver Marplus, some few days previous to her marriage. — 'Tis hard to say, whether surprise or rage was most predominant in the soul of this much injured husband, at so shocking a piece of intelligence. — He demanded to see the bond, which request being granted, he found it not as he at first flatter'd himself, a forgery, but signed with his wife's own hand, and witnessed by Mrs. Prinks, her woman, and another person whom he knew not.

It is certain, that no confusion ever exceeded that of Mr. Goodman's, at this time : — he sat like one transfixed with thunder, was wholly incapable of uttering one syllable ; — he appeared to the company as lost in thought ; but was indeed almost past the power of thinking 'till his lawyer roused him with these words, — “ Come, Sir,” said he, “ you see how “ the case stands, — there is no time “ to be lost, — you must either pay the “ money down, or get immediate security ; “ for I suppose you would not chuse to “ lie here to-night.” — This reasonable admonition brought him a little to himself : — he now began to reflect what it would best become him to do ; and, after a pause of some moments, “ I believe,” said he, “ that I have now in “ my house more than the sum in bills, “ that would discharge this bond, but I “ would willingly hear what this woman “ has to say before I pay the money, and “ will therefore give in bail.” — Accordingly he sent for two citizens of great worth and credit, to desire them to come to him ; — they instantly complied with this summons, and the whole affair being repeated to them, voluntarily offered to be his sureties.

Bail bonds were easily procured, but it took up some time in filling them up, and discharging the fees, and other consequential expences, that it was past one o'clock before all was over, and Mr. Goodman had liberty to return to his own habitation.

It was very seldom that Mr. Goodman staid late abroad; but whenever any thing happened that obliged him to do so, Lady Mellafin, through the great affection she pretended to have for him, would never go to bed 'till his return. — Mrs. Prinks for the most part was her sole companion in such cases; but it so fell out, that this night neither of the two young ladies had any inclination to sleep: — Miss Flora's head was full of the abovementioned plot, and the anxiety for its success; — the remembrance of the last adventure at Miss Forward's was not yet quite dissipated in Miss Betsy; — the coldness with which she imagined herself treated by her elder brother, with whom she had flattered herself of living, and being very happy under his protection, gave her a good deal of uneasiness. — To add to all these matters of disquiet, she had also received that afternoon a letter from Mr. Francis Thoughtless, acquainting her, that

that he had the misfortune to be so much bruised by a fall he got from his horse, that it was utterly impossible for him, to travel, and she must not expect him in town yet for some days.

The ladies were all together, sitting in the parlour, each chusing rather to indulge her own private meditations, than to hold discourse with the others, when Mr. Goodman came home. — Lady Mel-lasin ran to embrace him with a shew of the greatest tenderness, — “My dear Mr. Goodman,” cried she, “how much have I suffered from my fear, lest some ill accident should have befallen you!” — “The worst that could have happened has befallen me,” replied he, thrusting her from him; “yet no more than what you might very reasonably expect would one day or another happen.” — “What do you mean, my dear?” said she, more alarmed at his words and looks than she made shew of. — “You may too easily inform yourself what ’tis I mean,” cried he hastily, “on the retrospect of your behaviour; — I now find, but too late, how much I have been imposed upon. — Did you not assure me,” continued he, somewhat more mildly, “that you were free from all incumbrances but that girl,

“whom, since our marriage, I have tendered as my own?”—And then perceiving she answered nothing, but looked pale and trembled, he repeated to her the affront he had received, “which,” said he, “in all my dealings in the world, would never have happened, but on your account.”

Though Lady Mellasin had as much artifice, and the power of dissimulation, as any of her sex, yet she was at a loss thus taken unprepared. — She hesitated, — she stammered, and fain would have denied the having given any such bond; but finding the proofs too plain against her, she threw herself at his feet, — wept, and conjured him to forgive the only deception she had practised on him : — “It was a debt,” said she, “contracted by my former husband, which I knew not of. — I thought the effects he left behind him were more than sufficient to have discharged whatever obligations he lay under, and foolishly took out letters of administration. — The demand of Marplus came not upon me ’till some time after, — I then inconsiderately gave him my own bond, which he however promised not to put in force without previously acquainting me.”

This

This excuse was too weak as well as all the affection Mr. Goodman had for her, to pacify the emotions of his just indignation. — “And pray,” cried he, in a voice divided between scorn and anger, “of what advantage would it have been to me your being previously acquainted with it? — Could you have paid the money without robbing, or defrauding me; — No, Madam,” continued he, “I shall for the future give credit to nothing you can say, and as I cannot be assured that this is the only misfortune I have to dread on your account, shall consider what steps I ought to take for my defence.”

In speaking these words he rung the bell for a servant, and ordered that bed, to which he had invited Mr. Thoughtless, should that instant be made ready for himself. — All the tears and intreaties of Lady Mellasin were in vain, to make him recede from his resolution of lying alone that night; and as soon as he was told his orders were obeyed, he flung out of the room, saying, — “Madam, perhaps, we never more may meet between a pair of sheets.” — Whether at that time he was determined to carry his resentment so far, or not, is uncertain, but

what happened very shortly after, left him no other part to take, than that which he had threatened.



C H A P. XIV. .

Gives a full explanation of some passages, which hitherto have seemed very dark and mysterious.

THIS was a night of great confusion in Mr. Goodman's family ;—Lady Mellasin either was, or pretended to be, in fits ; Miss Flora was called up soon after she went to bed, but Mr. Goodman himself would not be prevailed upon to rise, though told the condition his wife was in, and that she begged with the utmost earnestness to see him.

This behaviour in a husband lately so tender and affectionate is a proof, not only that the greatest love, once turned, degenerates into its reverse, but also that the sweetest temper, when too much provoked by injuries, is not always the most easy to be reconciled. —The perfect trust he had put in Lady Mellasin, —the implicit faith he had given to all she said—and the

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the dependance he had on the love she had professed for him, made the deception she was now convicted of appear in worse colours, than otherwise it would have done.

The more he reflected on this ugly affair, the more he was convinced of the hypocrisy of his wife, in whom he had placed such confidence. — “ We have been married near five years,” said he, to himself; “ how comes it to pass, that the penalty of this bond was not in so long a time demanded? — It must be that she has kept it off by large interest, and forbearance money, and who knows how far my credit may be endangered for the raising of it? — ’Tis likely, that while I thought every thing necessary for my family was purchased with ready money, I may stand indebted to all the tradesmen this wicked woman has had any dealings with; — nay, I cannot even assure myself, that other obligations of the same kind with this I have already suffered for, may not some time or other call upon me for their discharge.”

With these disturbed meditations; instead of sleep, did he pass what was remaining of the night, when he went to

bed ; yet he rose the next day full as early as he was accustomed to do, after having enjoyed the best repose.

The first thing he did was to send for as many of those trades-people, as he either knew himself, or his servants could inform him, had at any time sent goods into his house. — On their presenting themselves before him, he found, more to his vexation than surprize, for he now expected the worst, that all of them, even to those who supplied his kitchen, had bills of a long standing : — he discharged all their several demands directly, and having taken a receipt in full from each of them, desired they would henceforward suffer no goods to be left within his doors without the value being paid on the delivery.

Mr. Goodman had just dispatched the last of these people, when he was told a woman begged leave to speak to him : — “ Another creditor, I suppose,” said he, and then ordered she should come in. — As soon as she did so, — “ Well, mistress,” cried he, seeing her a woman of a very plain appearance, — “ What is it you require of me ? ” — “ Nothing, Sir,” replied she, “ but that you will permit me to acquaint you with a
“ thing.

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“ thing, which it very much concerns you
“ to be informed of ? ” — “ I should
“ otherwise be an enemy to myself,” re-
sumed he, “ therefore pray speak what
“ you have to say.

‘ I am, sir,’ said she, ‘ the unfortunate
‘ wife of one of the most wicked men
‘ upon earth, and by my being so, have
‘ been compelled to be in some measure
‘ accessory to the injustice you have sus-
‘ tained; but I hope what I have to re-
‘ veal, will atone for my transgression.*
— Mr. Goodman then desired she would
sit down, and without any farther pre-
lude proceed to the business she came
upon.

‘ The sum of what I have to relate,*
rejoined she, ‘ is, that the bond, on
‘ which you were yesterday arrested, and
‘ for the payment of which you have
‘ given security, is no more than an im-
‘ pudent fraud; but the particulars, that
‘ prove it such, cannot but be very dis-
‘ pleasing to you; however I shall make
‘ no apology for relating them, as the
‘ perfect knowledge of the whole trans-
‘ action may put you in a way to pre-
‘ vent all future injuries of the like na-
‘ ture.

My

‘ My husband, whose name is Oliver
 ‘ Marplus,’ continued she, ‘ had the ho-
 ‘ nour of waiting on a nobleman belong-
 ‘ ing to court, when Sir Solomon Mella-
 ‘ sin had a post there :—his lady, now un-
 ‘ happily yours, took a fancy to him,
 ‘ and entered into a criminal conversation
 ‘ with him, some time before her hus-
 ‘ band’s death, and has ever since, unless
 ‘ very lately broke off, continued it. On
 ‘ my first discovering it, he begged me
 ‘ to be easy, and reminded me, that as he
 ‘ had nothing at present to depend upon,
 ‘ having lost his place, but her Ladyship’s
 ‘ bounty, I ought to wink at it, and be
 ‘ content that she should share his person,
 ‘ since I shared in the benefits arising
 ‘ from their intercourse. — I knowing
 ‘ his temper too well, not to know
 ‘ that any opposition I could make would
 ‘ be in vain, and seeing no other re-
 ‘ medy, was obliged to feign a consent
 ‘ to what the love I then had for him
 ‘ rendered most terrible to me. — Thus
 ‘ we went on, her Ladyship still supply-
 ‘ ing him with money for our support,
 ‘ ’till he being informed, that her mar-
 ‘ riage with you was near being consum-
 ‘ mated, he bethought himself of a stra-
 ‘ tagem to prevent the change of her
 ‘ con-

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‘ condition from depriving him of the
‘ continuance of her favour. — It was
‘ this :

‘ Their private meetings were always
‘ in the Savoy, at a house of my husband’s
‘ chusing for that purpose, the master
‘ of it being his intimate friend and
‘ companion. — Myself, and two men,
‘ whom he made privy to the plot, and
‘ were to personate officers of justice,
‘ were to be concealed in the next room
‘ to the lovers, and as soon as we found
‘ they were in bed, burst open the door,
‘ rush in, and catch them in the very act
‘ of shame.

‘ All this was executed according as it
‘ was contrived ; — my husband jumped
‘ out of bed, pretended to struggle with
‘ the sham constables, and swore he would
‘ murder me, — I acted my part, as they
‘ since told me, to the life, — seemed a
‘ very fury, and said I did not care what
‘ became of me, if I was but revenged
‘ upon my rival. — Lady Mellasin tore
‘ her hair, wept, and intreated me in the
‘ most abject terms to forgive, and not
‘ expose a woman of her rank to public
‘ scorn and infamy. — To which I re-
‘ plied, that it was not her quality should
‘ protect her ! — I loaded her with the
‘ most

‘ most inveterate reproaches I could think
 ‘ of. — Indeed, there required not much
 ‘ study for my doing so, for I heartily
 ‘ hated her. — After some time passed in
 ‘ beseechings on her side, and railings on
 ‘ mine, one of the pretended constables
 ‘ took me aside, as if to persuade me to
 ‘ more moderation, while the other talked
 ‘ to her, and insinuated as if a sum of
 ‘ money might compromise the matter. —
 ‘ My husband also told her, that though
 ‘ he detested me for what I had done, yet
 ‘ he wished her Ladyship, for her own
 ‘ sake, would think of some way to pacify
 ‘ me ; — for,’ said he, ‘ a wife in these
 ‘ cases has great power.’

‘ The terror she was in of appearing be-
 ‘ fore a civil magistrate, and of being liable
 ‘ to suffer that punishment the law inflicts
 ‘ upon an adulteress, and consequently the
 ‘ loss of all her hopes of a marriage
 ‘ with you, Sir, made her readily agree
 ‘ to do any thing I should require. —
 ‘ I seemed quite averse for a good
 ‘ while to listen to any terms of accom-
 ‘ modation, but at length affected to
 ‘ be overcome by the persuasions of the
 ‘ men I brought with me, and her pro-
 ‘ mise of allowing us a very handsome
 ‘ support, as soon as she became your
 ‘ wife, and should have it in her power.

‘ — This

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‘ — This I made slight on, and told her,
‘ that I would not depend upon her pro-
‘ mise for any thing. — It was then pro-
‘ posed, that she should give a bond for
‘ a large sum of money to Mr. Marplus,
— “ That you may do with safety,”
said he to her, “ as I shall have it in
“ my own hands, and you may be assured
“ will never put it in force to your pre-
“ judice.”

‘ In fine, Sir,’ continued Mrs. Marplus,
‘ she agreed to this proposal, and as it was
‘ then too late for the execution of what
‘ she had promised, on her making a so-
‘ lemn vow to fulfil it punctually the
‘ next day, I told her, she was at liberty
‘ to go home that night, but that I would
‘ not withdraw the warrant I pretended to
‘ have taken out against her, ’till all was
‘ over.

‘ She was, indeed, too much rejoiced
‘ at the expectation of getting off from
‘ the imaginary prosecution to think of
‘ breaking her word ; — my wicked hus-
‘ band, however, had the success of his
‘ design more greatly at heart, than to
‘ give her any long time for reflection ;
‘ accordingly we went pretty early the
‘ next morning to her lodgings, accom-
‘ panied by one of those, who had as-
‘ sumed

'sumed the character of constable, and
 'who in reality had formerly served the
 'parish where he still lives in that ca-
 'pacity, and a lawyer, previously directed
 'to fill up the bond in the strongest and
 'most binding terms that words could
 'form.—There was not the least demur
 'or objection, on the part of her Lady-
 'ship:—she signed her name, and Mrs.
 'Prinks, her woman, and the man we
 'brought with us, set their hands as wit-
 'nesses.

'You, see, sir,' pursued she, 'the drift
 'of this contrivance, Lady Mellasin was
 'the instrument, but it was you that was
 'ordained to suffer:—there was no
 'fixed sum, or sums, stipulated for the
 'support we were to receive from her;
 'but Marplus was so continually draining
 'her purse, that I have often been amazed
 'by what arts she imposed on you to re-
 'plenish it.—Whenever she began to
 'make any excuse for not complying with
 'his demands, he presently threatened her
 'with putting the bond in force against
 'you, by which means he extorted
 'from her almost whatever he re-
 'quired.

'One time in particular, he pretended
 'to be under an arrest for three hundred
 'pounds,

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“ pounds, and she not having so much
“ money by her, was obliged to send Mrs.
“ Prinks, with her diamond necklace, to
“ the pawn-broker’s to make it up; —
“ yet, — would you believe it, sir, —
“ notwithstanding all he got from her
“ Ladyship, he kept me poor and mean,
“ as you see; would not let me have a
“ servant, but made me wash his linnen,
“ and do all his drudgery, while he
“ strutted about the town like a fine fel-
“ low, with his tupee wig, and laced waist-
“ coat; and if I made the least complaint,
“ would tell me, in derision, that as I had
“ no children, I had nothing else to do but
“ to wait upon him. — I bore all this,
“ however, because I loved the villain,
“ and, indeed, did not then know he was
“ so great a one to me, as I now find
“ he is.

“ He pretended to me that he was
“ heartily weary of Lady Mellasin,—hated
“ her, --- and could no longer bear the
“ pain of dissembling with her. --- “ I
“ will, therefore,” said he, “ demand a
“ much larger sum of her than I know
“ it is in her power to raise : --- her non-
“ compliance will give me an excuse for
“ compelling her husband to pay the pe-
“ nalty of the bond, and when I have
“ got the money I will purchase an em-
“ ployment

“ ployment in some one or other of the
 “ public offices, on which you and I may
 “ live comfortably together the remainder
 “ of our days.”

‘ Accordingly, at his next meeting with
 ‘ Lady Mellafin, he told her, he had a pre-
 ‘ sent occasion for a sum of money, and
 ‘ she must let him have five hundred
 ‘ pounds within four or five days at far-
 ‘ thest.---This, it seems, extremely alarmed
 ‘ her ; she replied, that it was impossible
 ‘ for her to procure so much at once,
 ‘ --- complained that he had been too
 ‘ pressing upon her, and told him, that he
 ‘ ought not to expect she could always
 ‘ supply his extravagancies in the manner
 ‘ she had lately done.---High words arose
 ‘ between them on this account ;-- she re-
 ‘ proached him with the straits he had al-
 ‘ ready put her to, --- said he must wait
 ‘ ’till money came into her hands.---He
 ‘ swore the present exigence of his af-
 ‘ fairs required an immediate supply,
 ‘ ---that he saw no remedy but arrest-
 ‘ ing you, and they parted in great
 ‘ anger.

‘ The next day he sent me to her with
 ‘ a letter ;---neither she, nor Mrs. Prinks,
 ‘ was at home, and I did not judge proper
 ‘ to leave it with the servants, so car-
 ‘ ried

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ried it back again : --- he did not happen to ask me for it, and I never thought of returning it, which I am now very glad of, as it may serve to corroborate the truth of what I told you.'

In speaking this, she presented a paper to Mr. Goodman, which he took hastily out of her hands, and found it contained these words :

To Lady MELLASIN.

' MADAM,

' YOUR excuses wont do with me. ---
' Money I must have, --- I know you
' may raise it if you will, and I am
' amazed you should imagine I can believe
' any thing you say to the contrary, when
' you have an old fellow, who, you yourself
' told me, knows no end to his
' wealth, and that you married him only
' to make him my banker. --- Do not,
' therefore, offer to trifle with me any
' longer, for if you do, by my soul I shall
' put the bond in force, and then there will
' be an end of all love and friendship between
' you and him, who has been for so
' many years,

' Your constant servant,

' O. MARPLES.'

' Oh!

“ Oh! wretched,---wretched woman!” cried Mr. Goodman, as soon as he had done reading, --- “ to how low,---how “ contemptible a state has vice reduced “ her ! ”--- Mrs. Marplus perceiving by his countenance the distraction of his mind, would not prosecute her discourse, ’till he, recovering himself a little, bid her go on, if any thing yet remained to be related of this shocking narrative.

‘ I have told you, sir,’ resumed she, ‘ the preparations, the consequence you ‘ are but too well acquainted with, --- I ‘ have only to assure you, that I had not ‘ discovered my husband’s baseness, but ‘ with a view of your doing yourself justice :---you have no occasion to pay this ‘ bond,---you can prove it a fraud by the ‘ joint evidence of myself his wife, and another person, no less deeply concerned in ‘ the contrivance, and is ready to make ‘ his affidavit of every particular I have ‘ recited ;---but then, whatsoever is done, ‘ must be done with expedition, or he will ‘ be past the reach, either of you or me,--- ‘ I have just now learned, that instead of ‘ purchasing an employment, as he pretended to me, he is privately preparing ‘ to go over to Holland, Brussels, or some ‘ of those places, and settle there with a ‘ young

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‘ young huffey, who they say, is with child
‘ by him, and will leave me here to starve.
‘ His lawyer, to whom he has assigned the
‘ bond, is to advance fifteen hundred
‘ pounds upon it, on condition he has the
‘ residue of it to himself, when you shall
‘ discharge the whole. Now it is in your
‘ power, sir, to save yourself the payment
‘ of so much money, and relieve a much
‘ injured and distressed wife, by complain-
‘ ing to the court of Chancery of the im-
‘ position practised on you, and procure a
‘ *Ne exat regnum* to prevent his escape.’

Here she gave over speaking, and Mr. Goodman, after a short pause, replied, that he could not at that instant resolve on any thing ; but added, that he would take some advice, and then let her know how far she might be serviceable to him : ---on which she took her leave, after giving him directions where she might be found.

CHAP.



C H A P. XV.

*Shews some part of the consequences, produced by
the foregoing occurrence.*

THOUGH Mr. Goodman very easily perceived the wife of Marplus had not made the discovery she had done through any principle of conscience, or true contrition for having been an accomplice in the base action she had revealed, but merely in revenge of a husband, who had used her ill, and was about to leave her, yet he thought it behoved him to draw all the advantages he could from the knowledge of so astonishing, and so alarming a secret.

He therefore wasted no time, either in unavailing reflections on his own inconsiderateness, in marrying at his years, a woman, such as Lady Mellasin, nor in exclamations on her ingratitude and perfidiousness; but convinced beyond a doubt of the wrongs he had sustained, bent his whole mind on doing himself justice, in as ample a manner as possible, on the aggressors.

The

The lawyer, to whom he had applied the day before, was not only a person who had transacted all the business he had in his way, but was also his acquaintance of a long standing, and very good friend, and it was no inconsiderable consolation, under so grievous a misfortune, that he was not at a loss whom he should consult on an affair that required the greatest integrity, as well as ability.

That gentleman, luckily for Mr. Goodman's impatience, came to enquire how he did, after his last night's shock, just as he was preparing to wait on him, in order to acquaint him with the more stabbing one he had since received.— This injured husband rejoiced, as much as the present unhappy situation of his mind would permit, at the sight of his friend, and related to him, in as brief a manner as he could, the sum of the whole story he had received from Mrs. Marplus.

“ Good God ! ” said the lawyer, as soon as Mr. Goodman had given over speaking, “ I am confounded : — but, pray, sir, how have you resolved to do ? — In what way will you proceed ? ” —
 “ That I must ask of you, ” replied Mr. Goodman, hastily ; “ you may be
 VOL. II. I certain

“ certain I will not be passive in this mat-
 “ ter. — I only want to know what
 “ course I am to steer.” — “ Could you
 “ consent,” cried the lawyer, after a
 “ pause, to be divorced from Lady Mel-
 “ lasin ?” — “ Consent ! said Mr. Good-
 man, with more warmth than before, the
 “ most terrible vexation I endure, dwells
 “ in the consideration, that she is still my
 “ wife ; — were that name once erased,
 “ I think I should be easy.” — “ I hope
 “ then soon to see you so, said the other :
 “ but the first thing we have to do is to
 “ get the affidavits of the two witnesses ;
 “ and then arrest Marplus. — I shall order
 “ it so with his lawyer, whom I have un-
 “ der my thumb, on account of some
 “ mal-practices I have detected him in,
 “ that he shall not dare to procure bail
 “ for this unworthy client. — In a word,
 “ sir, continued he, I do not doubt, the
 “ case being so plain, but to relieve you
 “ from paying the penalty of the bond ;
 “ but, in the mean time, what will
 “ you do with Lady Mellasin ? — It is
 “ necessary she should be removed out of
 “ the house.” — “ The house is hell to
 “ me while she is in it,” said Mr. Good-
 man. — They had some further talk on
 this affair, and the manner in which Mr.
 Goodman was to conduct himself being
 settled,

settled, a footman was sent to bid Mrs. Prinks come down.

The confidant of all her lady's guilty secrets could not, now detected, behold the face of Mr. Goodman, without the extremest terror and confusion: he perceived it, as she stood trembling scarce half within the door, not daring to approach, —
 “Come near, said he; you are a servant,
 “and below the effects of my resentment,
 “which otherwise you might have cause
 “to dread:—I have a message to send by
 “you to your lady,—take care you deliver it in the words I give it.” — On which she ventured to advance a few steps farther into the room, and he went on, with a more authoritative voice than she had ever heard him assume before, in this manner:

“Tell her, said he, that for many
 “reasons I find it wholly improper she
 “should remain any longer under the
 “same roof with me;—desire her therefore to provide a lodging immediately,
 “for herself, and all belonging to her;
 “—you must all depart this very night,
 “so it behoves her to be speedy in her
 “preparations.” — “To-night, sir!” cried Mrs. Prinks? — “I have said it, rejoined he, fiercely, — “begone! it is
 1 2 “not

“not your business to reply, but to obey.”
—She spoke no more, but retired with much greater haste than she had entered.

Mr. Goodman, and his lawyer, were pursuing their discourse, on the present melancholy occasion, when the butler came in to lay the cloth for dinner, As soon as he had finished, and set all the necessary utensils on the table, Mr. Goodman ordered him to go to Miss Betsy’s chamber, and desire her to come down to dinner.

That young lady had passed the morning in a very disagreeable manner: — the want of repose the night before had made her lie in bed ’till the day was very far advanced.—When she got up, good-manners, good-breeding, and even common civility, obliged her to enquire after Lady Mellasin’s health; and being told that she was still in bed, the same motives induced her to pay her compliments in person.—On entering the chamber, a mournful scene presented itself to her eyes: — Lady Mellasin sat up, supported by her pillows, with all the tokens of despair and grief, in every feature of her face; — Miss Flora had thrown herself on a carpet by the bed-side, her head
leaning

leaning on the ruelle, and her eyes half drowned in tears;—Mrs. Prinks stood at a little distance from them, pale and motionless as a statue.—The approach of Miss Betsy made some alteration in their postures, and seemed to awaken them from that lethargy of silent woe:—Lady Mellasin began to exclaim on the hardness of her fate, and the cruelty of Mr. Goodman, who, she said, seemed glad of a pretence to throw off that affection, which she had flattered herself would have been as lasting as life, and bewailed herself in terms so tender and pathetic, that in spite of the little respect that Miss Betsy in reality had for her, and the just indignation she had for some time conceived against Miss Flora, her gentle, generous heart was touched with the strongest emotions of pity and forgiveness.

As she was far from suspecting all the grounds Lady Mellasin had for this immoderate grief, and in her soul believing that Mr. Goodman would soon be brought to forgive both the affront and the damage his fortune had suffered on her account, she begged her ladyship would not indulge the dictates of despair, but reflect on the natural sweetness of Mr. Goodman's disposition.—the great love he had for her, and

above all his strict adherence to those principles of religion, which forbid a lasting resentment; — and, in short, reminded her of every thing she could think of for her consolation.

None of them having yet breakfasted, she stayed, and drank coffee with them nor would her compassionate temper have permitted her to quit them so soon as she did, if she had not been called away to a milliner, who was come with some things she had the day before ordered to be brought, and she had just dispatched this little affair, and got out of her deshabille, when she had received the above-mentioned message from Mr. Goodman.

On her coming into the parlour, where dinner was that moment serving up, — “ I must request the favour of you, Miss Betsy, said Mr. Goodman, to do the honours of my table to-day.” — “ I shall do the best I can, sir, replied Miss Betsy, modestly, but am very sorry for the occasion, which obliges me to take upon me an office I am so little accustomed to.” — “ You will be the better able to discharge it when it becomes your duty,” said Mr. Goodman, with a half smile; “ but I believe
“ this

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“ this is the only time I shall put you to
“ it.—I have a kinswoman, who I expect
“ will be so good as to take care of the
“ affairs of my family henceforward.”—
“ O, sir, replied Miss Betsy, with a great
“ deal of concern, I hope Lady Mel-
“ lasin has not for ever forfeited her
“ place.”

Mr. Goodman was about to make some
reply, when they heard the voice of that
lady, whom Miss Betsy had just men-
tioned, extremely loud upon the stairs,—
“ I will not be used in this manner,
“ cried she; if I must go, let him tell
“ me so himself.” — On this Mr. Good-
man grew extremely red : ———— “ Go,
said he, to the footman that waited at
table, “ and tell Lady Mellasin I will not
“ be disturbed.” — “ Hold, cried the
“ lawyer, permit me, sir, to moderate
“ this matter.” In speaking these words,
he rose hastily, and without staying to
hear what Mr. Goodman would say, ran
to prevent Lady Mellasin from coming
in. While he was gone, “ Yes, Miss
“ Betsy, said Mr. Goodman, you will
“ lose your companion ; — Miss Flora
“ with her mother, leaves my house to-
“ night.”

Miss Betsy, who had gone out of Lady Mellafin's chamber, before Mrs. Prinks brought her this piece of intelligence from Mr. Goodman, was prodigiously surprised to hear him speak in this manner. — “ It
 “ is a sudden turn, indeed, pursued he;
 “ but the reasons which urge me to this
 “ separation, will hereafter appear such as
 “ I neither could nor ought to have resisted.” Miss Betsy only replying, that he was certainly the best judge of what he did, no farther discourse happened on the subject, nor indeed on any other for some moments.

At last, however, Mr. Goodman taking notice that she looked more than ordinarily serious, “ Perhaps, said he, you
 “ may think my house too melancholy
 “ for you when they are gone. — The
 “ relation I intend to bring home, though
 “ a perfect good woman, is pretty far advanced in years, and I believe receives but few visits, especially from
 “ the younger sort;—but as the house I
 “ have hired for Mr. Thoughtless will be
 “ ready in a day or two, I should imagine he would be glad to have you
 “ with him, ’till you marry;—but this,
 “ continued he, is at your own option,
 “ —I do but mention it, because I would
 “ have

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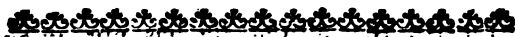
“ have you entirely easy in this point, and
“ consider what it is will most contribute
“ to make you so.”

Miss Betsy had only time to thank him for his goodness, before the lawyer came down : — that gentleman had found a more difficult task than he had expected, in bringing Lady Mellasin to submit to the injunctions she had received from her husband, — not that she had the least spark of conjugal affection for him, as the reader may very well suppose, or would have wished ever to see him more, if she could have lived without him in the same manner she did with him ; but the thoughts of leaving her large and richly furnished house, — her fine sideboard of plate, — her coach, — her equipage, and all those other ensigns of opulence and state she now enjoyed, were insupportable to her, and having in vain essayed what a feigned penitence and tenderness could do, to work him to forgiveness, had now resolved to try the effect of a more haughty and imperious deportment, “ — I will make him know I am his
“ wife, cried she, and whatever he is
“ possessed of, I am an equal sharer in :
“ — let him not therefore think, that
“ wherever he is master, I shall cease to
“ be mistress.”

The lawyer then remonstrated to her, that though it were true as she said, that she had a right to partake of his fortune, yet it was still in the power of a husband to oblige her to receive the benefit of that right, in what manner, and in what place, he should think proper: he told her, Mr. Goodman was determined that she should quit his house, and that all applications, made by her to the contrary, would be fruitless, and exasperate him the more, and only serve to widen the unhappy breach between them. “ If Mr. Goodman, said he, has no other complaint against your ladyship, than simply his paying the penalty of the bond, and it may be some other trifling debts, I cannot think he will, for any length of time, persevere in his present inflexibility of temper.” — These arguments, and some others he made use of, enforced with all the rhetoric and art he was master of, at last convinced her, that it was best for her to yield with a seeming willingness to the fate it was not in her power to avoid, and she promised him to send Prinks directly to hire an apartment for her, at a house near Golden-Square, with the mistress of which she had some small acquaintance.

The

The whole time this gentleman had been with Lady Mellafin, the meat was kept upon the table, but he would not stay to eat, — “ We have not a minute to lose,” said he to Mr. Goodman; — let us go, — fir, and dispatch what we have to do.” With these words they both went hastily out of the doors, leaving Miss Betsy in a good deal of consternation at what they were about.



CHAP. XVI.

Is a kind of olio, a mixture of many things, all of them very much to the purpose, though less entertaining than some others.

LADY Mellafin, who little expected that her husband was made so well acquainted, or even that he had the least thought of the worst part of her behaviour towards him, was ready enough to flatter herself, both from her experience of his uncommon tenderness for her, and from what his lawyer had insinuated, in order to prevail on her to go away with the less noise, that when this gust of passion

was blown over, he would be reconciled, and consent to her return.

These imaginations made her carry it with a high hand before the servants, and as they were packing up her things, while Mrs. Prinks was gone to prepare a lodging for her, — “Your master will be glad to fetch me home again, cried she; — poor man! he has been strangely wrong-headed of late. — I suppose he will be ready to hang himself when he considers what he has done, for he may be sure I shall not very easily forgive the affront he has put upon me.”

How truly amiable is an unblemished character, and how contemptible is the reverse! — Servants naturally love and respect virtue in those they live with, and seldom or ever either flatter or conceal the vices they do not greatly profit by. — The airs Lady Mellasin gave herself on this occasion, were so far from making them believe her innocent, or their master blameable, that as soon as they had got out of her sight, they only turned her pride, and the fall it was going to sustain, into ridicule and grimace.

Mifs

Miss Betsy, however could not see them depart in this manner, without feeling a very deep concern : — their misfortunes obliterated all the resentment she had at any time conceived against them, and she had never before been more angry, even with Miss Flora, for the treachery she had been guilty of to her, than she was now grieved at the sight of her humiliation.

She was sitting alone, and full of very serious reflections on this sudden change in the family, when her brother Thoughtless came in : — she was glad of the opportunity of sounding his inclinations, as to her living with him, and now resolved to do it effectually : — she began with telling him the whole story of Lady Mellasin's and Miss Flora's removal, and then complained how dully she should pass her time, with only Mr. Goodman, and an old gentlewoman, who was to come to be his housekeeper. — “ I thought you were
 “ about marrying, said he, and ex-
 “ pected, from what Mr. Goodman
 “ wrote to me, that my first compliment
 “ to you, on my arrival, would have been
 “ to have wished you joy. — You are
 “ not broke off with the gentleman, —
 “ are you ?”

The

The careless air with which he spoke these words, stung Miss Betsey to the quick; she took no notice, however, how much she was piqued at them, but replied, that the whole affair was mere suggestion; — that it was true, indeed, she had for some time received the addresses of a gentleman, recommended by her brother Frank; — that he, and some other of her friends, were very much for the match, and she supposed had spoke of it as a thing concluded on, because they wished it to be so; but for her own part, she never had as yet entertained one serious thought about the matter; and at present was far from having any disposition to become a wife; — “so that,” continued she, “if I am doomed to stay in Mr. Goodman’s house, ’till I am relieved that way, it is very probable I may be moped to death, and married to my grave.”

“Where is the necessity for that,” said he, “Are there not places enough in town, where you may find good company to board, or lodge with?” — “Doubtless there are many such, sir,” replied she, with some spirit, “and if I am so unhappy as not to have any friend so kind to make me an invitation, shall
“ be

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“ be obliged to seek an asylum amongst
“ strangers.”

Mr. Thoughtless looked a little confounded at these words : — he had seen from the beginning of her discourse, the aim to which it tended, and as he had his own reasons for not complying with her desire, would not seem to understand her ; but she now spoke too plain, and he was somewhat at a loss what answer to make, so as not to give her any cause of accusing his want of affection, and at the same time put her off from expecting he would agree to what she would have him, in this point, when fortunately for his relief, a letter, just brought by the post, was presented to Miss Betsy. — “ From “ L————e,” said she as soon as she took it into her hand. — “ From brother “ Frank, then I suppose,” cried he. — “ No,” answered she, “ from Lady “ Trusty :—you will excuse me, brother, “ while I look over the contents.”—She broke it open while she was speaking, and read to herself as follows :

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

“ My dear Miss Betsy,

‘ SIR Ralph received yesterday a letter
 ‘ from Mr. Thoughtless, dated Calais,
 ‘ the third instant, so I doubt not, but by
 ‘ this time I may congratulate you on his
 ‘ safe arrival in London; but I am sorry
 ‘ to acquaint you, that while you were
 ‘ embracing one brother, you were in very
 ‘ great danger of losing another; but do
 ‘ not be too much alarmed, — I hope the
 ‘ worst is past: — I believe he gave you
 ‘ an account himself, that by an unlucky
 ‘ fall from his horse he was prevented from
 ‘ going to London so soon as he had de-
 ‘ signed, but the mischief done him by
 ‘ this accident, was much greater than he
 ‘ imagined at the time of his writing to
 ‘ you. — What he took only for a com-
 ‘ mon bruise, proved to be a contusion,
 ‘ and for want of proper care at first,
 ‘ through the outrageousness of the pain,
 ‘ soon brought on a fever: — for two
 ‘ whole days we were in the utmost appre-
 ‘ hensions for his life; but now, thanks to
 ‘ the author of all mercies, we are assured
 ‘ by the physician that attends him, and
 ‘ who is esteemed the most skilful this
 ‘ country affords, that he is in a fair way
 ‘ of doing well. His delirium has quite
 ‘ left

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‘ left him, and he has recovered the use
‘ of his reason, so far as to intreat I would
‘ send the warmest wishes of his heart to
‘ you, and to desire you will make the
‘ same acceptable to his dear brother, if
‘ you are yet so happy as to see him : —
‘ he also enjoins you to pay his compli-
‘ ments to Mr. Truworth, in such words
‘ as are befitting the friendship you know
‘ he has for him. — I have much to say to
‘ you from myself, on the score of that
‘ gentleman, and should be glad to add to
‘ the advice I have already given you, but
‘ am deprived of that satisfaction by the
‘ arrival of some company, who are come
‘ to pass a week or a fortnight with us,
‘ therefore must defer what I have to say
‘ till another opportunity.—Farewel, may
‘ Heaven keep you under its protection,
‘ and your guardian angel never fail his
‘ charge. --- Be assured, that though I do
‘ not write so long, nor so often to you as
‘ I could wish, I am always,

‘ With the greatest sincerity,

‘ My dear Miss Betsy,

‘ Your very affectionate friend,

‘ And humble servant,

M. TRUSTY.*

‘ P. S.

‘ P. S. I wrote the above this morning,
 ‘ because one of our men was to have
 ‘ gone pretty early to town, but Sir
 ‘ Ralph having some letters of his own,
 ‘ which were not then ready, detained
 ‘ him, and I have now the pleasure to
 ‘ tell you, that the doctor, who is this
 ‘ moment come from your brother’s
 ‘ chamber, assures me that he has found
 ‘ him wonderfully mended since his
 ‘ visit to him last night. — Once more,
 ‘ my dear, adieu.’

Mr. Thoughtless perceiving some tears
 in the eyes of Miss Betsy, while she was
 reading, cried out, “ What is the matter,
 “ sister? — I hope no ill news from the
 “ country.” — “ Be pleased to read that,
 “ sir,” said she, giving him the letter,
 “ and see if I had not cause to be affected
 “ with some part of it.”

“ Poor Frank,” said he, as soon as he
 had done reading, “ I am sorry for the
 “ accident that has happened to him, but
 “ more glad it is like to be attended with
 “ no worse consequences. — Do not be
 “ melancholy, my dear sister, you find he
 “ is in a fair way of recovery, and I
 “ hope we shall soon have him with us.
 “ I long very much to see him,” conti-
 nued

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 187

nued he, " and the more so, as I have
" spoke in his behalf to a general officer
" whom I contracted an intimacy with
" at Paris, and who has promised me all
" the service he can, in procuring him a
" commission.

They had some further talk on family affairs, after which he told her he was troubled to leave her alone, but was obliged to return to some company he had made an elopement from when he came there. At parting he saluted her with a great deal of affection, — desired she would be cheerful, and said, he dare believe she had too much merit ever to have any real cause to be otherwise.

This tenderness very much exhilarated her drooping spirits. — she entertained fresh hopes of being in the house with a brother, who she found designed to live in the most elegant and polite manner, which was what she had at present, the most at heart of any thing in the world : — she now began to fancy he did not propose it to her, either because he did not think she would approve of it, or because he feared, that to testify any desire of removing her might offend Mr. Goodman, as she had boarded with him
ever

ever since she came to town, — she therefore resolved to desire the favour of that gentleman to mention it to him, as of his own accord, and let her know what answer he should make. — This idea gave her some pleasure for a while, but it was as soon dissipated; the thoughts of her brother Frank's misfortune, and the danger she could not be sure he was yet perfectly recovered from, came again into her mind; but this also vanished, on remembering the hopes Lady Trusty had given her; yet still she was discontented, though she knew not well at what. — In fine, she was so little accustomed to reflect much on any thing, much less to be alone, that it became extremely irksome to her. — “What a wilderness is this house!” cried she to herself. — “What a frightful solitude! — One would think all the world knew Lady Mellasin and Miss Flora were gone, that nobody comes near the door. — How still? — How quiet is every thing?” — Then would she start from her chair, measure how many paces were in the room, — look at one picture, — then on another, — then on her own resemblance in the great glass; — but all this would not do: — she wanted somebody to talk to, — something new to amuse her with. — “I wonder,” said she, “what is become
“ of

“ of Truworth. — I have not seen him
 “ these three days, — indeed I used him
 “ a little ill at our last conversation ; —
 “ but what of that ? if he loves me, as
 “ well as he professes, he will not sure pre-
 “ tend to be affronted at any thing I do.
 “ — My brother desires me to give his
 “ compliments, but if the man will not
 “ come to receive them, ’tis none of my
 “ fault ;— yet after all,” continued she,
 having paused a little, “ what privilege
 “ has our sex to insult and tyrannize over
 “ the men ? — it is certainly both ungene-
 “ rous and ungrateful to use them the
 “ worse, for using us, perhaps, better
 “ than we deserve. — Mr. Truworth is a
 “ man of sense, and, if I were in his
 “ place, I would not take such treatment
 “ from any woman in the world. — I could
 “ not much blame him if he never saw
 “ me more. — Well, — when next he
 “ comes, I will, however, behave to him
 “ with more respect.

Thus did the dictates of a truly reason-
 able woman, and the idle humour of a
 vain coquette, prevail by turns over her
 fluctuating mind : — her adventure at
 Miss Forward’s came fresh into her head ;
 — she was in some moments angry with
 Mr. Truworth for offering his advice ;
 in others, more angry with herself, for
 no*

not having taken it. — She remained in this perplexity 'till a servant, finding it grew late, and that his master did not sup at home, came in, and asked her if she would not please to have the cloth laid ; to which she answered, with all her heart ; on which the table being immediately spread, she eat of something that was there, and soon after went to bed, where, 'tis probable, she lost in sleep, both all the pleasure and the pain of her past meditations.

Mr, Goodman was all this while, as well as for several succeeding days also, busily employed on an affair no less disagreeable than it was new to him ; but by the diligence and adroitness of his lawyer, he got the affidavits, the warrant, and every thing necessary for the intended prosecution of Marplus and Lady Mellasin, ready much sooner than many others would have done, or he himself had expected.

The fatigue and perplexity he was under was indeed very great, as may be easily supposed, yet did it not render him neglectful of Miss Betsey ; — she had desired him to speak to her brother on her account, and he did so the first opportunity, — not as if the thing had been mentioned

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tioned by her, but as if he, in the present situation of his family, thought her removal convenient.

Mr. Thoughtless, from what his sister had said, expecting he should one time or other be spoke more plainly to upon that subject, had prepared himself with an answer ; — he told Mr. Goodman, that nothing could have been more satisfactory to him, than to have his sister with him, if her being so were any ways proper ; — said he “ As I am a single man, “ I shall have a crowd of gay young “ fellows continually coming to my “ house, and I cannot answer that all of “ them would be able to behave with “ that strict decorum, which I should “ wish to see always observed towards a “ person so near to me : — her presence, “ perhaps, might be some check upon “ them, and theirs no less disagreeable to “ her. — In fine, Mr. Goodman,” continued he, “ it is a thing wholly inconsistent with that freedom I propose to “ live in, and would not have her think “ on it.”

It was not that this gentleman wanted natural affection for his sister, that he refused what he was sensible she so much desired, but he was at present so circumstanced

stanced, that to have complied would, under a shew of kindness, have done her a real injury.—He had brought with him a young and very beautiful mistress from Paris, of whom he was fond, and jealous to that extravagant degree, that he could scarce suffer her a moment from his sight:—he had promised her the sole command of his house and servants, and that she should appear as his wife in all respects except the name.—How could he, therefore, bring home a sister, who had a right to, and doubtless would have claimed all those privileges another was already in possession of?—And how would it have agreed with the character of a virtuous young lady, to have lived in the same house with a woman kept by her brother as his mistress.

But this was a secret Miss Betsy was as yet wholly unacquainted with; and when Mr. Goodman repeated to her what had passed between them, on her score, and the excuse her brother had made for not complying with the proposal, she thought it so weak, and withal so unkind, that she could not forbear bursting into tears:—the good-natured old gentleman could not see her thus afflicted without being extremely concerned, and saying many kind things to pacify her:—“Do not weep,”

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“ weep, said he, “ I will make it my business, — nay, my study, to procure
“ some place where you may be boarded
“ to your satisfaction.” — “ I beg, sir,
“ that you will not mistake my meaning,
“ — I do assure you, sir, I am not wanting in sensibility of your goodness to
“ all our family, and to me in particular. — I must indeed be strangely
“ stupid not to think myself happy under
“ the protection of a gentleman of so humane and benign a disposition. — No,
“ sir, be persuaded there is no house in
“ London, except that of an own brother,
“ I would prefer to yours :— I will therefore, with your permission continue
“ here, nor entertain the least thought of
“ removing, unless some accident yet unforeseen obliges me to it.”

Mr. Goodman then told her, that he should be glad she would always do what was most for her own ease. This was all the discourse they had upon this head, and when Miss Betsy began to consider seriously on the behaviour both of Lady Mellasin and Miss Flora, she found there was little reason for her to regret the loss of their society ; — nor that she ought to think Mr. Goodman's house less agreeable for their being out of it ; — she received all such as she approv'd of, who had

come to visit them, and by doing so were acquainted with her ; and as to those who visited herself in particular, it was the same as ever. — Mr. Goodman's kinswoman, now his housekeeper, was a well-bred accomplished woman, and a chearful agreeable companion ; — she seemed studious to oblige her ; — all the servants were ready to do every thing she desired, and it would have been difficult for her to have found any place where she could have been better accommodated, or have had more cause to be contented ; and she would doubtless have thought herself more happy than she had ever been since her coming to Mr. Goodman's, if other things of a different nature had not given her some unquiet moments.

But besides the unkindness of one brother, on whom she had built the most pleasing hopes, and the indisposition of another, for whom she had a very great affection, the late behaviour of Mr. Trueworth gave her much matter of mortification : — she had not seen him for upwards of a week, — she imputed this absence to the rebuff she had given him at his last visit ; and though she could not avoid confessing in her heart, that she had treated him neither as a gentleman, nor a friend, yet her vanity having suggested,
that

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that he was incapable of resenting any thing she did, received a prodigious shock by the disappointment it now sustained.



C H A P. XVII.

Contains only such things as the reader might reasonably expect to have been informed of before.

IT was the fate of Miss Betsy to attract a great number of admirers, but never to keep alive, for any length of time, the flame she had inspired them with. Whether this was owing to the inconstancy of the addressers, or the ill conduct of the person addressed, cannot absolutely be determined; but it is highly probable, that both these motives might sometimes concur, to the losing her so many conquests. — Mr. Trueworth had been the most assiduous, and also the most persevering of all, that had ever yet wore her chains; — his love had compelled his judgment to pay an implicit obedience to her will; — he had submitted to humour all the little extravagancies of her temper, and affected to appear easy at what his reason could not but disapprove; — he had flattered

K 2

himself

himself, that all that was blame-worthy in her would wear off by degrees, and that every error would be her last, 'till a long succession of repeated inadvertencies made him first begin to fear, and then to be convinced, that however innocent she might be in fact, her manner of behaviour would ill suit with the character he wished should always be maintained by the woman he had made choice of for a wife.

His meeting her at Miss Forward's, — her obstinately persisting in going to the play with that abandoned creature, after the remonstrances he had made her on that score; — her returning home so late, and in disorder, conducted by a stranger, — in fine, what he saw himself, and had been told, concerning the proceedings of that night, gave the finishing stroke to all his hopes, that she would ever, at least while youth and beauty lasted, be brought to a just sensibility of the manner in which she ought to act.

If the letter, contrived and sent by the mischievous Miss Flora, had reached his hands but two days sooner, it would have had no other effect upon him than to make him spurn the invective scroll beneath his feet, and wish to serve the author in the same manner; but poor Miss Betsy had,
by

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by her own mismanagement, prepared his heart to receive any impressions to her prejudice, yet was the scandal it contain'd of so gross a kind, that he could not presently give into the believe of it:—"Good God!" cried he, "it is impossible; — if she has so little sense of honour or reputation, as the lightness of her behaviour makes some people too ready to imagine, her very pride is sufficient to secure her virtue: — she would not, — could not condescend to the embraces of a man, who thought so meanly of her, as to attempt the gaining her on any other score than that of marriage! — and yet," pursued he, after a pause, "who knows, but that very pride, which seems to be her defence, may have contributed to her fall? --- She has vanity enough to imagine she may act with impunity what she would condemn in others. --- She might fancy, as the poet says,

"That faultless form could act no crime,
"But Heav'n on looking on it must forgive."

"Why then," continued he, "should the foolish remains of the tenderness I once had for her, make me still hesitate

“ to believe her guilty ?—No,—no, the
 “ account before me has too much the
 “ face of truth ; — it is too circumstan-
 “ tial to be the work of mere invention.
 “ — No one would forge a lye, and at
 “ the same time present the means of de-
 “ tecting it to be so.—Here is the village
 “ specified,— the nurse’s name, — a par-
 “ ticular direction how I may convince
 “ myself of the shameful truth. — There
 “ is no room to doubt.”

To strengthen the opinion he had now
 of her guilt, the words Miss Flora had said
 to him, returned to his remembrance,
 — “ That there was a time when Miss
 “ Betsy had trusted her with her dearest
 “ secrets.” — “ Her dearest secrets ?”
 cried he : — “ What secrets can a vir-
 “ tuous young lady have, that shun the
 “ light, and require so much fidelity in
 “ the concealment of ? — No,—no, — it
 “ must be this Miss Flora meant by that
 “ emphatic expression. — The other could
 “ not hide the consequence of her shame-
 “ ful passion from the family ; — Lady
 “ Mellasin and Miss Flora must know it,
 “ and perhaps many more, who, while
 “ they were witnesses of the respect I paid
 “ her, laughed at the folly of my fond
 “ credulity.”

Thus

Thus at some times did he believe her no less guilty than the letter said, but at others, sentiments of a different nature prevailed, and pleaded in her favour ; — her adventure with the gentleman-commoner at Oxford came into his head : — “ If the too great gaiety of her temper,” said he, “ led her into danger, she then “ had courage and virtue to extricate herself out of it ” — He also recollected several expressions she had casually let fall, testifying her disdain and abhorrence of every thing that had the least appearance of indecency , — but then relapsing into his former doubts, — “ Yet who,” cried he again, “ can account for accident ? — “ she might, in one unguarded moment, “ grant, what in another she would blush “ to think of.

How terrible is the situation of a lover who endeavours all he can to reconcile his reason to his passion, yet to which side soever he bends his thoughts, finds in them things so diametrically opposite and incompatible, that either the one or the other must be totally renounced. — Willing therefore to take the party, which would best become his honour and reputation, Mr. Truworth resolved to banish from his mind all the ideas of those amiable

qualities he had admired in Miss Betsey, and remember only those which gave him occasion for disgust.

But this was a task not so easy to be accomplished as he imagined; for though the irregularity of Miss Betsey's conduct was of itself sufficient to deter him from a marriage with her, yet he found he stood in need of all helps to enable him to drive that once so pleasing object entirely from his mind.

To be therefore more fully confirmed how utterly unworthy she was of his regard, than could be made by this anonymous accusation, he went in person down to Denham, where following the directions given him in the letter, the cottage where Goody Bushman lived was presently pointed out to him, by the first person he enquired of. — So far, at least," said he to himself, "the letter-writer has told truth." — He then sent his servants with the horses to wait his return at a public-house in the village, and walked towards the place he came in search of.

He found the honest countrywoman holding a child in her arms on one side of the fire, — two rosy boys were sitting
opposite

opposite to her, with each a great piece of bread and butter in his hand. — At sight of a strange gentleman she got off her seat, and dropping a low curtesy, cried, “Do you please to want my husband, sir?” — “No, said Mr. Truworth, “my business is with you, if you are Mrs. Bushman.” — Goody Bushman, an’t please you, sir,” replied she. — And then bidding the boys get further from the chimney, reached him the handsomest joint-stool her cottage afforded for him to sit down.

He told her, that he had a kinswoman, who had some thoughts of putting a child to nurse in the country, — that she had been recommended; — “but” said he, “can we have nothing to drink together? — What sort of liquor does this part of the world afford?” — “Alack, sir,” replied she, “you fine gentlemen, mayhap, may like nothing but wine, and there is none to be had any nearer than Uxbridge.” — “Nor cyder,” cried he. — “I am afraid none good,” replied she, “but there is pure good ale down the lane, if your honour could drink that.” — “It is all one to me,” said Mr. Truworth, “if you like it yourself.” — Then turning to him who seemed the eldest of the two boys, “I

“suppose, my lad,” continued he, “you
 “can procure a tankard of this same ale.”
 “—— “Yes, sir,” cried his mother,
 hastily, “go to Philpot’s, and bid them
 “send a can of their best ale, and, do you
 “hear, desire my dame to draw it herself.”
 — Mr. Truworth then gave the boy
 some money, and he went on his errand,
 prudently taking with him a large slice
 of bread that happened to lay upon the
 dresser.

“That is a fine child you have in your
 “lap, said Mr. Truworth, “is it your
 “own?” — No,” answered she, — this
 “is a young Londoner.” — “some
 “wealthy citizen’s I suppose,” rejoined
 he, — “No, by my truly, sir,” said she,
 “it has neither father nor mother, and
 “belike must have gone to the parish,
 “if a good sweet young lady had not
 “taken pity of it, and given it to me
 “to nurse; and, would you think it, sir,
 “is as kind to it, and pays as punctually
 “for it, as if it were her own. — My
 “husband goes up to London every
 “month to receive the money, and she
 “never lets him come home without it,
 “and gives him over and above sixpence
 “or a shilling to drink upon the road:
 “—— poor man,—he loves a sup of good
 “ale dearly, — that’s all his fault, —
 “though

“ though I cannot say he ever neglects
 “ his business ; — he is up early and
 “ down late, and does a power of work
 “ for a little money. — Sir Roger Hill
 “ will employ nobody but him, and good
 “ reason, because he makes him take
 “ whatever he pleases, and that is little
 “ enough, God knows, for he is a hard
 “ man ; and if it were not for my nur-
 “ sing, we could not make both ends
 “ meet, as the saying is ; — but he is
 “ our landlord, and we dare not disoblige
 “ him.”

This innocent countrywoman would
 probably have run on with the whole de-
 tail of her family affairs, if Mr. Truworth,
 desirous of turning the tide of her commu-
 nicative disposition into a channel more sa-
 tisfactory to his curiosity, had not inter-
 rupted her.

“ This is a very extraordinary charity
 “ you have been telling me of,” said he,
 “ especially in a young lady, — she must
 “ certainly be somewhat of kin to the
 “ child.” — “ None in the varsal world,
 “ sir,” answered she, “ only her godmo-
 “ ther.” — The boy now bringing in the
 “ ale, Mr. Truworth was obliged to taste
 “ it, and testify some sort of approbation,
 “ as the good woman had praised it so
 K 6 “ much

much; but he made her drink a hearty draught of it, after which, "And pray," resumed he, "what is the name of the child?" — "O, sir," replied she, the "lady has given it her own name, Betsy; — she is called Miss Betsy Thoughtless herself,—though she is a woman grown, and might have had a child or two of her own; — but you know, sir, they are all called Miss 'till they are married."

Mr. Truworth, in the present disturbance of his thoughts, making no reply, she went on: — "She is a sweet young lady, I can tell you, sir," said she; "I never saw her but once, and that was when I went to fetch the child, — she used me with so much familiarity, — not a bit proud, — charged me to take care of her little Betsy, and told me, if she lived, I should keep her 'till she was big enough to go to school, — and told me she would have her learn to write and read, and work, — and then she would put her 'prentice to a mantua-maker, or a milliner, or some such pretty trade, — and then, who knows, sir, continued she, holding up the child at arms length, and dancing it, "but some great gentleman or other may fall in love with my little Betsy,"
"and

“and I may live to see her ride in her coach?—I warrant she will make much of her old nurse.”

“There are many strange things happen in the world, indeed,” said Mr. Trueworth, with a sigh. After which, thinking there was no further discovery to be made, he rose up to go away; but seeing the change of the money he had sent by the boy for the beer, lay upon the table, he gave it to him, saying,—“Here, my good boy, take this, and divide it with your brother, to buy apples.” Then turning to the nurse took his leave of her with this compliment, “Well, Mrs. Bushman, I believe you are a very honest careful woman, and shall not fail to remember you whenever it comes in my way. — In the mean time,” added he, putting a crown piece into her hands, “take this, and make merry with your husband.” —The poor woman was so transported, that she knew not how to thank him sufficiently;—she made twenty courtesies, — crying, “Heavens bless you, sir; — you are a right noble gentleman I am sure. — Marry such guests come not every day.”—And with such like expressions of gratitude, followed him ’till he was quite out of hearing.

What

What now could this enquiring lover think? ——— Where was the least room for any conjecture in favour of Miss Betsy's innocence, to gain entrance into his breast? —He had seen the child, — had heard by whom, and in what manner it was delivered: — the charge given with it, and the promises made for its future protection, and whether the nurse was really so weak as to be imposed upon by this pretence of charity, or whether bribed to impose it upon others, the fact, as related in the letter, appeared to be so plain, from every circumstance, as to admit no possibility of a doubt.

A marriage with Miss Betsy was, therefore, now quite out of the question with him:—the manner of entirely breaking off with her, was the only thing that puzzled him.—Loth was he to reproach her with the cause, and equally loth to be deemed so inconstant, as to quit her without a justifiable one. He remained in this dilemma for the space of two days, at the expiration of which, after much debating within himself, he wrote, and sent to her, by a servant, the following epistle:

To

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ MADAM,

‘ THE very ill success I have met
 ‘ with, in the only business which brought
 ‘ me to this town, has determined me to
 ‘ quit it with all possible expedition, and
 ‘ not to think of a return, ’till I find my-
 ‘ self in a disposition more capable of re-
 ‘ lishing its pleasures. You have given
 ‘ me, madam, too many instances how
 ‘ little agreeable my presence has ever
 ‘ been, not to convince me, that I stand
 ‘ in no need of an apology for not waiting
 ‘ on you in person, and that this distant
 ‘ way of taking my leave will be less un-
 ‘ welcome to you than a visit, which per-
 ‘ haps would only have interrupted your
 ‘ more gay amusements, and broke in, for
 ‘ some moments, on that round of plea-
 ‘ sures, with which you are perpetually en-
 ‘ compassed. — May you long enjoy all
 ‘ the felicities the manner you chuse to live
 ‘ in can bestow, while I retire to solitude,
 ‘ and lost in contemplation, on some late
 ‘ astonishing occurrences, cry out with the
 ‘ poet :

“ There is no wonder, or else all is wonder.”

‘ If

‘ If I speak in riddles, a very small retrospect on some remarkable passages in your own conduct, will serve for the solution; — but that might probably be imposing on yourself too great a task. — I shall therefore trouble you no farther than to assure you, that though I cease to see you, I shall never cease to be

‘ With the most friendly wishes,

‘ MADAM,

‘ Your very humble servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.’

Mr. Truworth having dispatched this letter, which he doubted not but would finish all his concerns with Miss Betsy, thought he had nothing more to do, than to take leave of the friends he had in town, and retire to his seat in the country, and there endeavour to lose the remembrance of all that had been displeasing to him since he left it.

CHAP.



CH A P. XVIII.

Is of very small importance, yet contains such things as the reader may expect to hear.

WHILE Mr. Truworth was employing himself in exploring the truth of Miss Betsy's imaginary crime, and hunting after secrets to render her more unworthy of his love, that young lady's head was no less taken up with him, though in a widely different manner; she wanted not a just sense of the merits, both of his person and passion; and tho' a plurality of lovers, the power of flattering the timid with vain hopes, and awing the proudest into submission, seemed to her a greater triumph than to be the wife of the most deserving man on earth, yet when she consulted her heart, she found, and avowed within herself, she could part with that triumph, with less reluctance in favour of Mr. Truworth, than of any other she yet had seen.

His absence, therefore, and the strange neglect he testified in not sending to acquaint

quaint her with the cause, gave her as much inquietude, as a person of her humour could be capable of feeling; — but whether it proceeded in reality from the first shootings of a growing inclination, or from that vanity, which made her dread the loss of so accomplished a lover, cannot be easily determined; — but to which soever of these causes it was owing, I think we may be pretty certain, that had he visited her in the situation her mind then was, he would have had no reason to complain of his reception.

She never went abroad without flattering herself with the expectation of hearing, on her return home, that he had been there, or at least that some letter or message from him had been left for her, and every disappointment involved her in fresh perplexity.—In short, if she had consider'd him with half that just regard, while he continued to think her worthy of his affections, as she was beginning to do when he was endeavouring to drive all favourable ideas of her from his mind, they might both have been as happy as at present they were the contrary.

She had been with Miss Mable, and two other ladies of her acquaintance, to see that excellent comedy, call'd the
Careless

Careless Husband:— She was very much affected with some scenes in it; — she imagined she saw herself in the character of Lady Betty Modish, and Mr. Trueworth in that of Lord Morelove, and came home full of the most serious reflections, on the folly of indulging an idle vanity, at the expence of a man of honour and sincerity. — She was no sooner within the doors, than the letter above-mentioned was put into her hands; — as they told her, it had been left for her in the beginning of the evening, by one of Mr. Trueworth's servants, and she knew, both by the superscription, and device on the seal, that it came from that gentleman, she ran hastily up stairs to her chamber, in order to examine the contents; — but what flutterings seized her heart! — What an universal agitation diffused itself through all her frame, on reading even the first lines of this cruel epistle! “ Good Heaven! ” cried she, going out of town, — “ not to return.” And then having proceeded a little farther; — “ What, added she, not see me before he goes, — “ sure the man is either mad, or I am in “ a dream.”

Surprize, and some mixture of a tender remorse, were the first emotions of her soul; but when she came to that part of the
the

the letter, which seemed to reflect upon her conduct, and the way in which she chose to live, her native haughtiness reassumed its former power, and turned her all into disdain and rage. — “No retrospect, said she, on my own behaviour, can ever justify the audacious reproaches he treats me with. If I have been to blame, it is not his province to upbraid me with it.”

As she was entirely ignorant of the base artifice that had been put in practice against her, and was conscious of no fault Mr. Trueworth had to accuse her of, but that of her going with Miss Forward to the play, after the warning he had given her of the danger, it must be confessed, she had a right to think the provocation too slight to draw from him such resentful expressions, much less to induce him to abandon her.

“Ungrateful man, said she, bursting into tears of mingled grief and spite, to treat me thus, when I was just beginning to entertain the kindest thoughts of him! — When I was ready to acknowledge the error I was guilty of, in not following his advice, and had resolved never to throw myself into such inconveniences again. — ’Tis plain he never loved

“ loved me, or he would not have taken
 “ so poor, — so trifling a pretence to
 “ break with me.”

Thus, for some moments, did she bewail, as it were, the ill treatment she thought she had received from him. — Then looking over the letter again, —
 “ With what a magisterial air, cried she,
 “ with what an affectation of superiority
 “ does he conclude! — With the most
 “ friendly wishes my humble servant. —
 “ Good luck; ——— friendly! — let
 “ him carry his friendly wishes to those
 “ he may think will receive them as a
 “ favour.”

Upon revolving in her mind all the circumstances of her behaviour towards Mr. Truworth, she could find nothing, except what passed at his last visit, that could give him any occasion of disgust, and even that she looked upon as a very insufficient plea for that high resentment he now expressed, much more for his resolving to throw off a passion he had a thousand and a thousand times vowed should be as lasting as his life.

The anonymous letter sent her by Miss Flora, some time since, now came fresh into her head; ——— that passage in it,
 which

which insinuated, that Mr. Truworth had no real design of marrying her, — that he but trifled with her, and on the arrival of her brothers would find some pretence or other to break entirely with her, seemed now to tally exactly with his present manner of proceeding. — “The devil, said she, may some times speak truth, — Mr. Truworth has but too well verified the words of that malicious girl, and what she herself then thought a falshood is now confirmed by fact, — yet, wherefore cried she again, did he take all this pains, if he never loved me, — never hoped any recompence for his dissimulation, what end could he propose by practising it? — What advantage, what pleasure could it give him to affront the sister of his friend, and impose upon the credulity of a woman he had no design upon?”

———— It would be endless to repeat the many contradictory surmises, which rose alternately in her distracted mind, so I shall only say, she sought, but the more she did so, the more she became incapable of fathoming the bottom of this mysterious event.

The butler was laying the cloth in the parlour for supper when she came home, — Mr. Goodman had waited for her some time,

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time, thinking she might be undressing, and now sent to desire she would come down; — but she begged to be excused, — said she could not eat, and then called for Nanny, who was the maid that usually attended her in her chamber, to come up and put her to bed.

This prating wench, who would always know the whole secrets of every body in the family, whether they thought fit to entrust her with them or not, used frequently to divert Miss Betsy with her idle stories; but it was not now in her power, — that young lady had no attention for any thing, but the object of her present meditations, which the other not happening to hit upon, was answered only with peevishness and ill-humour.

But as every little circumstance, if any way adapted to the passion we at that time are possessed of, touches upon the jarring string, and seems a missionary from fate; an accident, the most trifling that can be imagined, served to renew in Miss Betsy, the next morning, those anxieties which sleep had, in some measure, abated.

A ballad-singer happening to be in the street, the first thing she heard, on her waking,

waking, was these words, sung in a sonorous voice, just under the window :

‘ Young Philander woo’d me long,
 ‘ I was peevish and forbad him ;
 ‘ I would not hear his charming song,
 ‘ But now I wish, I wish I had him.’

Though this was a song at that time much in vogue, and Miss Betsey had casually heard it an hundred times, yet in the humour she now was, it beat an alarm upon her heart.—It reminded her how inconsiderate she had been, and shewed the folly of not knowing how to place a just value on any thing, ’till it was lost, in such strong colours before her eyes, as one would scarce think it possible, an incident in itself so merely bagatelle could have produced.

Again she fell into very deep reflexions, and divesting herself of all passion, pride, and the prejudice her vanity had but too much inspired her with, she found, that though Mr. Truworth had carried his resentment further than became a man, who loved to that degree, as he pretended to have done ; yet she could no way justify herself to her brother Frank, Lady Trusty, or any of those friends, who had espoused

espoused his cause, for having given him the provocation.

To heighten the splenetic humour she was in, Mr. Goodman, who having been taken up with his own affairs, had not mentioned Mr. Truworth to her for some days, happened this morning, as they sat at breakfast, to ask her how the courtship of that gentleman went on, and whether there was like to be a wedding, or not? — Perceiving she blushed, — hung down her head, and made no answer, — “Nay,—nay,” — said he, “I told you long ago I would not interfere in these matters, and have less reason now than ever to do so, as your eldest brother is in town, and who is doubtless capable of advising you for the best.” — Miss Betsy was in a good deal of confusion; — she knew not as yet whether it would be proper for her to acquaint Mr. Goodman with what had passed between Mr. Truworth and herself, or to be silent on that head, ’till she should see what a little time might bring about. — As she was thinking in what manner she should reply, Mr. Goodman’s lawyer, luckily for her relief, came in, and put an end to a discourse, which, in the present situation of her mind, she was very unfit to bear a part in.

L

But

But as if this was to be a day of continued admonitions to Miss Betsey, she was no sooner dressed, and ready to quit her chamber, that she heard Miss Mabel's voice upon the stairs ; — As that young lady was not accustomed to make her any morning visits, she was a little surprized ; — she ran however to meet her, saying, “ This is a favour I did not expect, and therefore have the more cause to thank you.” — “ I do not know,” replied the other, as she entered the room, “ whether you will think I deserve thanks or not, when you hear the business that brought me ; for I assure you I am come only to chide you.” — “ I think,” said Miss Betsey, with a sigh, “ that all the world takes the liberty of doing so with me ; but pray, my dear,” continued she, “ how am I so unhappy as to deserve it from you ?”

“ Why you must know,” replied Miss Mabel, “ that I have taken upon me to be the champion of distressed love ; — you have broken a fine gentleman's heart, and I am come to tell you, that you must either make it whole again, as it was before he saw you, or repair the damage he has sustained by giving him your own.” — “ I plead
“ no

"not guilty," said Miss Betty, in a tone
 somewhat more sprightly than before,
 "but pray, who has gained so great an
 "influence over you, as to send you on
 "so doughty an errand?" — "No, my
 "dear, you are quite mistaken in the
 "matter," replied the other, — "I at-
 "sure you I am not sent, — I am only
 "led by my own generosity, and the sight
 "of poor Mr. Truworth's despair." —
 "Truworth?" cried Miss Betty hastily,
 "What do you mean? — "I mean,"
 replied the other, "to engage you, if
 "the little rhetoric I am mistress of can
 "prevail on you to consider, that while
 "we use a man of sense and honour ill,
 "we do ourselves a real injury, — 'Tis
 "love our beauty has inspired, may, for
 "for a time, secure our power, but it will
 "grow weaker by degrees, and every
 "little coquette air we give ourselves,
 "lessen the value of our charms. — I
 "I know there is at present some very
 "great brulée between you and Mr.
 "Truworth; — he is a match every
 "way deserving of you, — he has the
 "approbation of all your friends, and I
 "have heard you acknowledge, you are
 "not insensible of his merit; to what
 "end then do you study to perplex and
 "give unnecessary pain to a heart, which
 "you, according to all appearances,
 will

“ will one day take a pride in rendering
 “ happy ?”

“ This is an extreme fine harrangue,
 “ indeed,” replied Miss Betsey, “ but I
 “ would fain know for what reason it is
 “ directed to me ; ---- if Mr. Truworth
 “ imagines I have used him ill, I think
 “ it no proof of his understanding, to
 “ make a proc'amation of it ; ----but, for
 “ heaven's sake, how came you to be the
 “ confidante of his complaints ?”

‘ Indeed I have not that honour,’ said
 Miss Mabel ; ‘ finding myself a little ill
 ‘ this morning, I thought the air would
 ‘ do me good, so went into the park,
 ‘ taking only a little girl with me, who
 ‘ lives at the next door, because I would
 ‘ not go quite alone ; being in the desha-
 ‘ bille you see, I crossed the grass, and
 ‘ was passing towards the back of the
 ‘ bird-cage walk, where who should I see
 ‘ among the trees but Mr. Truworth,
 ‘ if I may call the object that then pre-
 ‘ sented itself to me by that name : for
 ‘ indeed Miss Betsey, the poor gentleman
 ‘ seems no more than the shadow of him-
 ‘ self. ---- He saw me at a distance, and
 ‘ I believe would have avoided me, but
 ‘ perceiving my eyes were upon him,
 ‘ cleared up his countenance, as well as
 ‘ he

‘ he was able, and accosted me with the
 ‘ usual salutations of the morning.--- “ It
 ‘ is somewhat surprising, Madam,” said
 he, with an air of as much gallantry as
 he could assume, “ to find a lady so
 “ justly entitled to the admiration of the
 “ world, as Miss Mabel is, shun the gay
 “ company of the Mall, and chuse an
 “ unfrequented walk, like this.” ---- “ I
 “ might retort the same exclamation of
 “ surprise,” replied I, “ at so unexpect-
 “ edly meeting with Mr. Truworth here.”

‘ After this, as you know, my dear,’
 continued she, ‘ I have lately, on your
 ‘ account, had the pleasure pretty often of
 ‘ Mr. Truworth’s company, I took the
 ‘ liberty to ask him where he had buried
 ‘ himself, that I had not seen him for so
 ‘ many days: — to which he answered,
 ‘ not without a confusion, which I saw
 ‘ he attempted, though in vain, to con-
 ‘ ceal from me. — “ Yes, Madam, I have
 “ indeed been buried from all pleasure,
 “ — have been swallowed up in affairs
 “ little less tormenting than those of the
 “ grave; — but,” added he, “ they are
 “ now over, and I am preparing to re-
 “ turn to my country-seat, where I hope
 “ to re-enjoy that tranquility, which,
 “ since my leaving it, has been pretty
 “ much disturbed.”

‘ Nothing could equal my astonishment
 ‘ at hearing him speak in this manner :
 “ — To your country seat ! ” cried I ;
 “ not to continue there for any long
 “ time : ” ‘ I know not as yet, Madam,’
 replied he, and then after a pause,
 “ perhaps for ever,” added he. — “ Bless
 “ me,” said I, “ this is strange indeed, —
 “ Miss Betsy did not tell me a word of
 “ it, and I saw her but last night.” —
 “ she might not then know it, Madam,”
 answered he ; “ but if she had, I am
 ‘ not vain enough to imagine, she would
 “ think a trifle, such as my departure,
 “ worth the pains of mentioning.”

‘ I then,’ pursued Miss Mabel, ‘ en-
 ‘ deavoured to rally him out of this hu-
 ‘ mour. ——— After having told him, I
 ‘ had a better opinion of your under-
 ‘ standing and generosity, than to be capa-
 ‘ ble of believing you thought so lightly
 ‘ of his friendship and affection, I added,
 ‘ that this was only some little pique be-
 ‘ tween you, — some jealous whim ; but
 ‘ he replied to all I said on this subject
 ‘ with a very grave air, pretended bu-
 ‘ siness, and took his leave somewhat
 ‘ abruptly, for a man of that politeness,
 ‘ I had till now always observed in him.

‘ He

‘He carries it with a high hand, indeed,’ cried Miss Betsy; — ‘but it is no matter, — I shall give myself no trouble whether he stays in town, — or whether he goes into the country, — or whether I ever see him more. — What? — does the man think to triumph over me?’

‘I do not believe that is the case with Mr. Truworth,’ said the discreet Miss Mabel, ‘but I know it is the way of many men to recriminate in this manner, — and pray when they do, who can we blame for it but ourselves in giving them the occasion? — For my part I should think it an affront to myself to encourage the addresses of a person, I did not look upon worthy of being treated with respect.’

She urged many arguments to convince Miss Betsy of the vanity and ill consequences of trifling with an honourable and sincere passion, which though no more than what that young lady had already made use of to herself, and was fully persuaded in the truth of, she was not very well pleased to hear from the mouth of another.

Though these two ladies perfectly agreed in their sentiments of virtue and reputation, yet their dispositions and behaviour in the affairs of love, were as widely different, as any two persons possibly could be ; — and this it was, which during the course of their acquaintance, gave frequent interruptions to that harmony between them, which the mutual esteem they had for each other's good qualities, would otherwise have rendered perpetual.



C H A P. XIX.

Is multum in parvo.

THERE is an unaccountable pride in human nature, which often gets the better of our justice, and makes us espouse what we know within ourselves is wrong, rather than appear to be set right by any reason, except our own.

Miss Betsy had too much of this unhappy propensity in her composition. — A very little reflection enabled her to see clearly enough the mistakes she sometimes fell into ; but she could not bear they should be seen by others. — Miss Mabel
was

was not only in effect the most valuable of all the young ladies she conversed with, but was also the most esteemed and loved by her, yet was she less happy and delightful in her company, than in that of several others, for whom her good sense would not suffer her to have the least real regard. — The truth is, that though she was very well convinced of her errors, in relation to those men who professed themselves her admirers, yet she loved those errors in herself, — thought they were pretty, and became her ; — and therefore as she could not as yet resolve to alter her mode of behaviour, was never quite easy in the presence of any one, who acted with a prudence she would not be at the pains to imitate.

There were two young ladies, who had an apartment in the palace of St. James's, their father having an office there, who exactly suited with her, in the most volatile of her moments : — they had wit, — spirit, and were gay almost to wildness, without the least mixture of libertinism, or indecency. — How perfectly innocent they were, is not the business of this history to discuss, but they preserved as good a reputation as their neighbours, and were well respected in all public places.

There it was Miss Betsy chiefly found an asylum from those perplexing thoughts, which in spite of her pride, and the indifference she had for mankind, would sometimes intrude upon her mind on Mr. Trueworth's account ; — here she was certain of meeting a great variety of company ; — here was all the news and scandal the town could furnish ; — here was musick, — dancing — feasting — flattery ; — in fine, here was every thing, that was an enemy to care and contemplation.

Among the number of those, who filled the circle of those two court belles, there was a gentleman named Munden : — he appeared extremely charmed with Miss Betsy at first sight, and after having informed himself of the particulars of her family and fortune, took an opportunity, as he was conducting her home one night, to intreat she would allow him to pay his respects to her where she lived. — This was a favour Miss Betsy was never very scrupulous of granting, and consented now the more readily, as he thought the report of a new lover would gall Mr. Trueworth, who, she heard by some, who had very lately seen him, was not yet gone out of town.

Mr.

Mr. Munden, to testify the impatience of his love, waited on her the very next day, as soon as he thought dinner would be over, at Mr. Goodman's : — he had the satisfaction of finding her alone ; but fearing she might not long be so, suffered but a very few minutes to escape before he acquainted her with the errand on which he came : — the terms in which he declared himself her admirer, were as pathetic as could be made use of for the purpose ; — but though this was no more than Miss Betsy had expected, and would have been strangely mortified if disappointed, by his entertaining her on any other score, yet she affected, at first, to treat it with surprize, and then on his renewing his protestations, to answer all he said with a sort of raillery, in order to put him to the more expence of oaths and asseverations.

It is certain, that whoever pretended to make his addresses to Miss Betsy, stood in need of being previously provided with a good stock of repartees, to silence the sarcasms of the witty fair, as well as fine speeches to engage her to more seriousness, — Mr. Munden often found himself at his *ne plus ultra*, but was not the ' disconcerted at it ; — he was a

— he was accustomed to attend at the levees of the great, and knew very well, that persons in power seldom failed to exercise it over those, who had any dependance on them : and looking on the case of a lover with his mistress, as the same with one who is soliciting for a pension, or employment, had armed himself with patience, to submit to every thing his tyrant should inflict, in the hope, that it would one day be his turn to impose laws, — according to the poet's words :

‘ The humblest lover, when he lowest lies,
 ‘ But kneels to conquer, and but falls to rise.’

Miss Betty was indeed a tyrant, but a very gentle one ; she always mingled some sweet with the sharpness of her expressions : — if in one breath she menaced despair, in the next she encouraged hope, and her very repulses were sometimes so equivocal, as that they might be taken for invitations : — she played with her lovers, as she did with her monkey, but expected more obedience from them ; — they must look gay or grave, according as she did so ; — their humour, and even their very motions must be regulated by her

her influence, as the waters by the moon : — in fine, an exterior homage was the chief thing to be required ; for as to the heart, her own being yet untouched, she gave herself but little trouble how that of her lovers stood affected.

Mr. Munden, with less love, perhaps, than any man who had addressed her, knew better how to suit himself to her humour : — he could act over all the delicacies of the most tender passion, without being truly sensible of any of them, and though he wished, in reality, nothing so much as attaining the affections of Miss Betsy, yet wishing it without those timid inquietudes, — those jealous doubts, — those perplexing anxieties, which suspense inflicts on a more solid mind, he was the more capable of behaving towards her in the way she liked.

He was continually inviting her to some party of pleasure or other, — he gallanted her to all public shews, — he treated her with the most exquisite dainties of the season, and presented her with many curious toys. — Being to go with these ladies, at whose appointment he first commenced his acquaintance with her, and some other company to a masquerade, he waited on her some hours before the time, and taking

He began with asking her, how it happened that he had not seen Mr. Truworth for so long a time? To which she replied, with the utmost indifference, that she took some things ill from that gentleman, and that, perhaps, he might have some subject of complaint against her, — ‘ Therefore,’ said he, ‘ as our humours did not very well agree, it was best to break off conversation.’

He then questioned her concerning Mr. Munden; — ‘ I hope,’ said he, ‘ you have taken care to inform yourself as to his character and circumstances.’ — ‘ No truly, sir,’ answered she, with the same careless air as before, ‘ as I never intend to be the better or the worse for either, I give myself no pain about what he is.’ — Mr. Goodman shook his head, and was going to reason with her, on the ill consequences of such a behaviour, when some company coming in, broke off, for a time, all further discourse between them.



C H A P. XX.

Shews Miss Betsy left entirely to her own management, and the cause of it, with some other particulars.

MR. Goodman, who had been a little vexed at being interrupted, in the remonstrances he thought so highly necessary should be made to Miss Betsy, took an opportunity of renewing them the next morning, in the strongest expressions he was master of.

Miss Betsy, with all her wit, had little to say for herself, in answer to the serious harangue made to her by Mr. Goodman, on her present fashion of behaviour; — her heart avowed the justice of his reproofs, but her humour, too tenacious of what pleased itself, and too impatient of controul, would not suffer her to obey the dictates either of his or her own reason. — She knew very well the tender regard he had for her, on the account of her deceased father, and that all he spoke was calculated for her good; but then it was a good she was not at present ambitious of attain-

attaining, and thought it the privilege of youth to do whatever it listed, provided the rules of virtue were unfringed, so that all that he could get from her was,—that her amusements were innocent, --- that she meant no harm in any thing she did, ---that it was dull for her to sit at home alone, and when in company could not quit it abruptly, on any consideration of hours.

Mr. Goodman found, that to bring her to a more just sense of what was really her advantage, would be a task impossible for him to accomplish, he began heartily to wish she were under the care of some person, who had more leisure to argue with her, on points so essential to her happiness: ——— he told her that he indeed had feared his house would be too melancholy a recess for her, since the revolution that had lately happened in his family, and therefore wished some more proper place could be found for her; —
 ‘ And for such a one,’ said he, ‘ I shall
 ‘ make it my business to enquire, — and
 ‘ there seems not only a necessity for my
 ‘ doing so, but that you should also
 ‘ choose another guardian; for as soon as
 ‘ the present unlucky business I am engaged in shall be over, it is my resolution to break up house-keeping, ----
 ‘ leave

‘ leave my business to my nephew, Ned Goodman, whom I expect by the first ship that arrives from the East-Indies, and, having once seen him settled, retire, and spend the remainder of my days in the country.’

The melancholy accents with which Mr. Goodman uttered these words, touched Miss Betsy very much ; --- she expressed, in terms the most affectionate, the deep concern it gave her, that he had any cause to withdraw from a way of life, to which he had so long been accustomed ; but added, that if it must be so, she knew no person so proper, in whose hands the little fortune she was mistress of should be entrusted, as those of her brother Thoughtless, if he would vouchsafe to take that trouble upon him.

‘ There is no doubt to be made of that, I believe,’ replied Mr. Goodman, and I shall speak to him about it the first time I see him.’-- They had some farther talk on Miss Betsy’s affairs, and that young lady found, he had very largely improved the portion bequeathed her by her father ; for which, in the first emotions of her gratitude, she was beginning to pour forth such acknowledgments, as he thought it too much to hear, and interrupted her, saying

saying, he had done no more than his duty obliged him to do, and could not have answered to himself the omission of any part of it.

It is so natural for people to love money, even before they know what to do with it, that it is not to be wondered at, that Miss Betsy, now arrived at an age capable of relishing all the delicacies of life, should be transported at finding so considerable, and withal so unexpected, an augmentation of her fortune, which was no less than one third of what her father had left her.

The innate pleasure of her mind, on this occasion, diffused itself through all her form, and gave a double lustre to her eyes and air, so that she went with charms new pointed to a ball that night, for which the obsequious Mr. Munden had presented her with a ticket; — but though she had all the respect in the world for Mr. Goodman, and indeed a kind of filial love for him, yet she had it not in her power to pay that regard to his admonitions she ought to have done; — she came not home till between one and two o'clock in the morning, but was extremely surprised to find, that when she did so, the knocker was taken off the door; a thing which,

MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS. 237

which, in complaisance to her, had never before been done, 'till she came in, how late soever she stayed abroad : — she was, nevertheless, much more surprised, as well as troubled, when at the first rap her chairman gave, a footman, who waited in the hall for her return, immediately opened the door, and told her, with all the marks of sorrow in his countenance, that his master had been suddenly taken ill, and that his physician, as well as Mrs. Barns, the house-keeper, had given strict orders there should be no noise made in the house, the former having said his life depended on his being kept perfectly quiet.

It is not to be doubted, but that, on this information, she went with as little noise as possible up to her chamber, where Nanny, as she was putting her to bed, confirmed to her what the footman had said, and added, that she had heard the doctor tell Mrs. Barns, as he was going out, that he was very apprehensive his patient's disorder would not be easily remedied.

Distempers of the body, which arise from those of the mind, are indeed much more difficult to be cured, than those which proceed from meer natural causes.

—Mr.

—Mr. Goodman's resentment for the ill usage he had sustained, from a woman he had so tenderly loved, a while kept up his spirits and hindered him from feeling the cruel sting, which preyed upon his vitals, and insensibly slackened the strings of life ; but the first hurry being over, and the lawyer having told him, that every thing was drawn up, and his cause would be brought before the commons in a few days, he sunk beneath the apprehensions, — the thoughts of appearing before the doctors of the civil law, to several of whom he was known, to prove his own dishonour, — the talk of the town, — the whispers, — the grimaces, — the ridicule, which he was sensible this affair would occasion when exposed, — the pity of some, — and the contempt he must expect from others ; — all these things, though little regarded by him while at a distance, now they came more near at hand, and just ready to fall upon him, gave him such a shock, as all the courage he had assumed was not sufficient to enable him to resist.

He was seized at once with a violent fit of an apoplexy at a coffee-house, where a surgeon being immediately sent for, he was let blood, as is common in such cases. — This operation soon recovered

vered him, so far as speech and motion, but reason had not power to re-assume her seat in his distracted brain for many hours;—he was brought home in a chair,—the surgeon attended him,—saw him put into bed, and sat by him a considerable time, but finding him rather worse than better, told Mrs. Barns, he durst not proceed any further, and that they must have recourse to a physician, which was accordingly done.

This gentleman, who was esteemed the most skilful of his profession, hearing Mr. Goodman frequently cry out, ‘My heart! ---my heart!’ laid his hand upon his bosom, and found, by the extraordinary pulsations there, that he had symptoms of an inward convulsion, wrote a prescription, and ordered he should be kept extremely quiet.

Towards morning he grew more composed, and by degrees recovered the use of his understanding as perfectly as ever, but his limbs were so much weakened by that severe attack the fit had made upon him, that he could not sit up in his bed without support. --- The physician, however, at his next visit, had great hopes of him, --- said his imbecility proceeded only from a fever of the nerves, which he
doubted

doubted not but to abate, and that he would be well in a few days.---How uncertain,---how little to be depended upon is art, in some cases! --- Mr. Goodman felt that within himself, which gave the lie to all appearances, and fully convinced that the hand of death had seized upon his heart, would not defer a moment putting all his affairs in such a posture, as should leave no room for contention among the parties concerned, after his decease : --- he began with sending for Mr. Thoughtless, and consigned over to him the whole fortunes of Mr. Francis, and Miss Betsey, the latter being first obliged, as not being yet of age, to chuse him for her guardian in form.---Having thus acquitted himself, in the most honourable manner, of the trust reposed in him, for the children of his friend, he considered what was best to be done, in relation to those of his own blood. --- By his death, the intended process against Lady Mellan would be prevented, and consequently the third part of his effects would devolve on her, as being the widow of a citizen ; --- he therefore, having consulted with his lawyer, if such a thing were practicable, made a deed of gift to his nephew, Mr. Edward Goodman, of all his money in the bank, stocks, and other public funds. --- After this, he made his will,

will, and the lawyer perceiving he had left but few legacies, asked him, how the residue of what he was possessed of should be disposed, to which he replied, ‘Greatly as I have been wronged by Lady Mellasin, I would not have her starve : — I have been calculating in my mind to what her dividend may amount, and believe it will be sufficient to enable her to live in that retired manner, which best becomes her age and character.’

Mr. Goodman, having thus settled all his affairs in this world, began to make such preparations for another, as are necessary for the best of men. — In the mean time, as the least noise was disturbing to him, it was judged proper that Miss Betsy, who could not live without company, should remove. — No boarding-place to her mind being yet found, and having done with all hopes of living with her brother, (as she was by this time informed of the true reasons he had for her not doing so,) took lodgings in Jermy-n-street, and finding the interest of her fortune, through the good management of her late guardian, would allow it, hired a maid and foot-boy to wait upon her.

The adieu she received from Mr. Goodman was the most tender and affectionate that could be:—she was very much moved with it, and sincerely lamented the loss she should sustain of so honest and worthy a friend; but her natural sprightliness would not suffer any melancholly reflections to dwell long upon her mind, and the hurry she was in of sending messages to all her acquaintance, with an account of the change of her situation, very much contributed to dissipate them. — This important business was scarce over, and she well settled in her new habitation, when one of Mr. Goodman's footmen brought her a letter from her brother Frank, which had been just left for her by the post. — It contained these lines:

TO MISS BETSY THOUGHTLESS.

‘ My dear sister,

‘ I HAVE been snatched from the
 ‘ brink of the grave, by the skill of one
 ‘ of the best physicians in the world,
 ‘ and the tender, and, I may say, mater-
 ‘ nal care of our most dear, and truly
 ‘ valuable friend, the excellent Lady
 ‘ Trusty. — The first use I made of my
 ‘ recovered health, is to give an account
 of

' of it to those, whom, I flatter myself, will
 ' be obliged by the intelligence. — I
 ' thank you for the many kind wishes
 ' you have sent me, during the course of
 ' my illness, but hoped to have seen, be-
 ' fore now, another name subscribed to
 ' your letters, than that you received
 ' from your birth; and cannot help say-
 ' ing, I am a little surprised, that in the
 ' two last you favoured me with, you
 ' have been entirely silent on a subject
 ' you know I have always had very much
 ' at heart. — I have also very lately re-
 ' ceived a letter from Mr. Trueworth,
 ' wherein he tells me, he is going to his
 ' country seat, — expresses the most kind
 ' concern for me, but mentions not the
 ' least syllable of you, or of his passion.
 ' — I fear, my dear sister, there is some
 ' misunderstanding between you, which
 ' would very much trouble me, for your
 ' sake especially; but I shall defer what
 ' I have to say to you, 'till I have the
 ' pleasure of seeing you. — I am not yet
 ' judged fit to sit my horse for so long a
 ' journey, and the places in the stage-
 ' coach are all taken for to-morrow, but
 ' have secured one in Thursday's coach,
 ' and expect to be with you on Saturday.
 ' — I accompany this to you with one
 ' to my brother, and another to Mr.
 ' Goodman, so have no occasion to trouble

‘ you with my compliments to either. —
‘ Farewel! —I think I need not tell you,
‘ that I am,

‘ With an unfeigned regard,

‘ My dear sifter,

‘ Your very affectionate brother,

‘ And humble servant,

‘ F. THOUGHTLESS.’

‘ P.S. Sir Ralph and Lady Trusty are
‘ both from home at this time, or I am
‘ certain their good wishes, if no more,
‘ would have joined mine, that you may
‘ never cease to enjoy whatever it be-
‘ comes you to desire.—My dear Betsey,
‘ adieu.’

The joy, which this letter would have afforded Miss Betsey, had been complete, if not somewhat abated by the apprehensions of what her brother would say to her, when he should find she was indeed intirely broke off with Mr. Truworth; but as the reader may probably desire to know in what manner he passed his time after that event, and the motives which induced him to stay in London, it is now highly proper to say something of both.

C H A P.



CHAP. XXI.

The author is under some apprehensions, will not be quite pleasing to the humour of every reader.

IT is certain that Mr. Truworth, at the time of his writing his last letter to Miss Betsy, was fully determined to go into the country, and was already beginning to make such preparations as he found necessary for his journey, when an accident of a very singular nature put a sudden stop to them, and to his attentions.

He was one day just dressed, and going out, in order to dine with some company, for he now chose to be as little alone as possible, when one of his servants delivered a letter to him, which he said was brought by a porter, who waited below for an answer. — As the superscription was in a woman's hand, and he was not accustomed to receive any billets from that sex, he broke it open with a kind of greedy curiosity, and found in it these lines :

TO CHARLES TRUEWORTH, Esq;

‘ S I R,

‘ I AM a woman of fortune, family,
 ‘ and an unblemished character, — very
 ‘ young, and most people allow not dis-
 ‘ agreeable; — you have done me the
 ‘ greatest injury in the world without
 ‘ knowing it; but I take you to be more
 ‘ a man of honour, than not to be willing
 ‘ to make what reparation is in your power.
 ‘ — If the good opinion I have of you
 ‘ does not deceive me, you will readily ac-
 ‘ cept this challenge, and not fail to meet
 ‘ me about eleven o’clock to morrow in
 ‘ the morning, at General Tatten’s bench,
 ‘ opposite Rosamond’s pond in St. James’s
 ‘ Park, — there to hear such interrogato-
 ‘ ries as I shall think fit to make you, and
 ‘ on your sincere answer to which, depends
 ‘ the whole future peace, if not the life of
 ‘ her, who, at present can only subscribe
 ‘ herself,

‘ In the greatest confusion,

‘ S I R,

‘ Your unfortunate,

‘ And impatient

‘ INCOGNITA.’

Mr

Mr. Truworth was a good deal surprised, but had no occasion to consult long with himself in what manner it would become a man of his years to behave in such an adventure, and therefore sat down and immediately wrote an answer in these terms :

To the Fair INCOGNITA.

‘ MADAM,

‘ **THOUGH** a challenge from an
 ‘ unknown antagonist might be rejected
 ‘ without any danger of incurring the
 ‘ imputation of cowardice; and, besides,
 ‘ as the combat to which I am invited is
 ‘ to be that of words, in which your sex
 ‘ are generally allowed to excel, I have
 ‘ not any sort of chance of over-coming,
 ‘ yet to shew that I dare encounter a fine
 ‘ woman at any weapon, and shall not re-
 ‘ pine at being foiled, will not fail to give
 ‘ you the triumph you desire, and to that
 ‘ end will wait on you exactly at the time
 ‘ and place mentioned in yours, ---- ’till
 ‘ when you may rest satisfied that I am,

‘ With the greatest impatience,

‘ The obliging INCOGNITA’s,

‘ Most devoted servant,

‘ C. TRUEWORTH.

Though Mr. Trueworth had not only heard of, but also experienced, when on his travels abroad, some adventures of a parallel nature with this, yet as it never had entered into his head, that the English ladies took this method of introducing themselves to the acquaintance of those they were pleased to favour, the challenge of the Incognita, — who she was, — where she had seen him, — what particular action of his had merited her good graces, and a thousand other conjectures, all tending to the same object, very much engrossed his mind. — Indeed he was glad to encourage any thoughts, which served to drive those of Miss Betsey thence, whose idea, in spite of all his endeavours, and her supposed unworthiness, would sometimes intervene, and poison the sweets of his most jovial moments among his friends.

His curiosity, for it cannot be said was as yet instigated by a warmer passion, rendered him however very careful not to suffer the hour mentioned in the lady's letter to escape, but though he was at the place somewhat before the time, she was the first, and already waited his approach, — As he turned by the corner of the pond, he began to reflect, that as she
had

had given him no signal, whereby she might be known, he might possibly mistake for his Incognita some other, whom chance might have directed to the bench, and was somewhat at a loss how to accost her in such a manner, as that the compliment might not make him be looked upon as rude or mad, by a person who had no reason to expect it from him.

But the fair lady, who, it is likely, was also sensible she had been a little wanting in this part of the assignation, soon eased him of the suspense he was in, by rising from her seat, as he drew near, and saluting him with these words, — ‘ How perfectly obliging, said she, is this punctuality ! ——— It almost flatters me I shall have no reason to repent the step I have taken.’ — ‘ A person who is injured,’ replied Mr. Truworth, ‘ has doubtless a right to complain ; and if I have, though never so unwarily, been guilty of any wrong, cannot be too hasty, nor too zealous in the reparation ; ——— be pleased, therefore, madam, to let me know the nature of my offence, and be assured, that the wishes of my whole heart shall be to expiate it.’

In concluding these words, one of her gloves being off, he took hold of her hand, and kissed it with either a real, or a seeming warmth. — ‘Take care what you say, cried she, lest I exact more from you, than is in your power to perform; but let us sit down, pursued she, suffering him still to keep her hand in his, and begin to fulfil the promise you have made, by satisfying me in some few points I have to ask, with the same sincerity as you would answer Heaven.’ — ‘Be assured I will,’ said he, putting her hand a second time to his mouth, ‘and this shall be the book on which I will swear to every article.’

‘First then, demanded she, Are you married, or contracted?’ — ‘Neither, by all that’s dear, said he.’ — ‘Have you no attachment, resumed she, to any particular lady, that should hinder your engaging with another?’ — ‘Not any, upon my honour, answered he.’

I should before now have acquainted my reader, that the lady was not only masqued, but also close muffled in her hood; that Mr. Truworth could discover no part even of the side of her face, which growing weary of this examination,
he

he took an opportunity to complain of.—
 ‘ Why this unkind reserve, my charming
 ‘ Incognita ? said he : I have heard of pe-
 ‘ nitents, who, while confessing crimes they
 ‘ were ashamed of, kept their faces hid,
 ‘ but I believe there never was a confessor
 ‘ who concealed himself, — permit me
 ‘ to see to whom I am laying open my
 ‘ heart, and I shall do it with pleasure.’
 ‘ — ‘ That cannot be, answered she, even
 ‘ for the very reason you have alledged :
 ‘ — I have something to confess to you,
 ‘ would sink me into the earth with shame,
 ‘ did you behold the mouth that utters
 ‘ it : ——— In a word, I love you,
 ‘ and after having told you so, can you
 ‘ expect I will reveal myself.’— ‘ Else how
 ‘ can I return the bounty as I ought, cried
 ‘ he, or you be assured you have not
 ‘ lavished your favours on an insensible or
 ‘ ungrateful heart ?’

‘ Time may do much, said she ; — a
 ‘ longer and more free conversation with
 ‘ you may perhaps embolden me to make
 ‘ a full discovery of my face to you, as
 ‘ I have already done of my heart.’ —
 Mr. Truworth then told her, that the
 place they were in would allow but very
 few freedoms, and added, that if he were
 really so happy as she flattered him he
 was, she must permit him to wait on her,

where he might have an opportunity of testifying the sense he had of so unhopèd, and as yet so unmerited a blessing.

‘ Alas! cried she, I am quite a novice
 ‘ in assignations of this sort, — have so
 ‘ entire a dependance on your honour, that
 ‘ I dare meet you any where, provided you
 ‘ give me your solemn promise not to
 ‘ take any measures for knowing who I
 ‘ am, nor make any attempts to oblige
 ‘ me to unmask, ’till I have assumed cou-
 ‘ rage enough to become visible of my
 ‘ own free will.’

Mr. Truworth readily enough gave her the promise she exacted from him, not at all doubting but he should be easily able to find means to engage her consent for the satisfaction of her curiosity in these points.
 ‘ Well then, said she, it belongs to you
 ‘ to name a place proper for these secret
 ‘ interviews.’

On this, after a little pause, he answered, that since she judged it inconvenient for him to wait upon her at home, or any other place where she was known, he would be about the close of day at a certain coffee-house, which he named to her; — ‘ where, continued he, I will
 ‘ attend

‘ attend your commands, and on your
 ‘ condescending to stop at the door in a
 ‘ hackney coach, will immediately come
 ‘ down and conduct you to a house secure
 ‘ from all danger of a discovery.’ — She
 hesitated not a moment to comply with
 his proposal, yet in the same breath she
 did so, affected to be under some fears,
 which before she had not made the least
 shew of ; — said, ‘ she hoped he would
 ‘ not abuse the confidence she reposed in
 ‘ him,— that he would take no advantage
 ‘ of the weakness she had shewn, — that
 ‘ though she loved him with the most ten-
 ‘ der passion, and could not have lived
 ‘ without revealing it to him, yet her
 ‘ inclinations were innocent, and pure as
 ‘ those of a vestal virgin,’ and a great
 ‘ deal more stuff of the like sort ; which,
 though Mr. Trueworth could scarce re-
 frain from smiling at, yet he answered
 with all the seriousness imaginable. — ‘ I
 ‘ should be unworthy, madam, of the af-
 ‘ fection you honour me with,’ said he,
 ‘ were I capable of acting towards you in
 ‘ a manner unbecoming of you, or of my-
 ‘ self ; and you may depend I shall en-
 ‘ deavour to regulate my desires, so as to
 ‘ render them agreeable to yours.’

After

After some farther discourse of the like nature, she rose up and took her leave, insisting at parting, that he should not attempt to follow her, or take any method to find out what way she went; which injunction he punctually obeyed, not stirring from the bench, 'till she was quite out of sight.

This adventure prodigiously amused him; — never, in his whole life, had he met with any thing he knew so little how to judge of. — She had nothing of the air of a woman of the town; and besides, he knew it was not the interest of those, who made a trade of their favours, to dispense them in the manner she seemed to intend; — nor could he think her a person of the condition and character her letter intimated. He could not conceive, that any of those he was acquainted with, would run such lengths for the gratification of their passion, especially for a man who had not taken the least pains to inspire it. — Sometimes he imagined it was a trick put upon him, in order to make trial how far his vanity would extend in boasting of it; — it even came into his head, that Miss Betsy herself might get somebody to personate the amorous incognita, for no other purpose than to divert

divert herself, and disappoint his high-raised expectation: but this last conjecture dwelt not long upon him: — he had heard she now entertained another lover, with whom she was very much taken up, and, consequently, would not give herself so much trouble about one, who had entirely quitted her. — In fine, he knew not what to think, as he could not tell how to believe he had made such an impression upon any woman, without knowing it; as the incognita pretended, he was apt to imagine he should neither see nor hear any more of her. — This uncertainty, however, employed his mind the whole day, and he was no less impatient for the proof, than he would have been, if actually in love with this invisible mistress.

The wished-for hour at last arrived, and he waited not long before he was eased of one part of his suspense, by being told, a lady in a hackney coach enquired for him:—he was extremely pleased to find, at last, he had not been imposed upon, by a trick of any of his frolicksome companions, and immediately flew to the coach side, where seeing it was indeed his Incognita, he jumped directly in, with a transport, which, doubtless, was very agreeable to her.

Thou'

Though he had often heard some gentlemen speak of houses, where two persons of different sexes might at any time be received, and have the privilege of entertaining each other with all the freedom and privacy they could desire; yet, as he had never been accustomed to intrigues of this nature, and thought he should have no occasion to make use of such places, he had not given himself the trouble of asking where they might be found, therefore he had now no other resource, than either a tavern or a bagnio, the latter of which he looked upon, for more reasons than one, as the most commodious of the two, so ordered the coachman to drive to one in Silver-street; — he excused himself at the same time to the lady, for not having been able to provide a better asylum for her reception; but she appeared perfectly content, — told him, she had put herself under his care, — relied upon his honour and discretion, and left all to his direction.

Being come into the bagnio, they were shewn into a handsome large room, with a bed-chamber within it. — Mr. Trueworth had his eye on every thing in an instant, and finding all was right, ordered a supper to be prepared, and then told
the

the waiter, he would dispense with his attendance, 'till it was ready. — As soon as he found himself alone with his Incognita, 'Now, my angel' said he, embracing her, 'I have an opportunity to thank you 'for the affection you have flattered me 'with the hopes of, but at the same time 'must complain of the little proofs you 'give me of it ; — the greatest stranger to 'your heart would be allowed the privilege of a salute, yet I am denied the privilege of touching those dear lips, which 'have denounced my happiness.' — 'Do 'not reproach me,' answered she, with 'denying what is not yet in my power to 'grant; — I cannot let you see my face, 'and you have promised not to force me.' — 'I have,' replied he ; 'but that promise binds me not from indulging my 'impatient wishes with things you have 'not stipulated : — your neck, your 'breasts are free, and those I will be revenged upon.' — With these words he took some liberties with her, which may better be conceived than described ! — she but faintly resisted, and, perhaps would have permitted him to take greater thus masked, but the discovery of her face was what he chiefly wanted : — 'You 'might, at least, cried he, 'oblige me 'with a touch of those lovely lips, I am 'forbid

‘ forbid to gaze upon ; — here is a dark recess,’ continued he, pointing to the inner room, ‘ will save your blushes.’ — He then raised her from the chair, and drawing her gently towards the door, sung, in a very harmonious voice, this stanza :

Away with this idle, this scrupulous fear,
 For a kiss in the dark,
 Cry’d the amorous spark,
 There is nothing, no, nothing too dear.’

Having led her into the chamber, and seated her on the bed, which happened to be so disposed, that no gleam of light came upon it from the candles in the next room, — ‘ Now, my charmer, said he, taking hold of her mask, ‘ you have no excuse for keeping on this invidious cloud.’ — ‘ How impossible is it,’ answered she, letting it fall into his hand, ‘ to refuse you any thing !’

What conversation after this passed between them, I shall leave to the reader’s imagination, and only say, that the voice of the Incognita being more distinguishable by the button of her mask being removed, Mr. Truworth could not help thinking, he had heard before accents very like those with which he was now enter-

entertained, though where, or from what mouth they had proceeded, he was not able to recollect.

This conjecture, however, rendering him more impatient than ever for the discovery; he omitted nothing in his power, either by words or actions, to dissuade her from re-assuming her vizard, when they should quit that scene of darkness, — ‘How gladly would I comply,’ cried she, ‘but that I fear ———.’ ‘Fear what!’ cried Mr. Truworth, eagerly interrupting her. — ‘I fear to lose you.’ replied she fondly embracing him; — ‘my face is already but too well known to you: — you have often seen it, but seen it without those emotions I endeavoured to inspire: — how then can I now hope it will have the effect I wish!’ ‘Unkindly judged,’ said he; ‘with what indifference soever I may have regarded you, the endearing softness, the enchanting transports you have now blessed me with, would give new charms to every feature, and make me find perfections I never saw before. — Come then, my goddess,’ continued he, raising her, ‘shine with full lustre on me, and fix me your adorer.’ — ‘Well,’ cried she, ‘you are not to be resisted, and I will venture.’

These

These words brought them to the chamber door, and shewed the Incognita to her amazed gallant to be no other than Miss Flora. — ‘ Miss Flora Mellafin! — Good heavens!’ cried he. — ‘ You seem surprized and shock’d,’ said she: — alas! ‘ my apprehensions were too just.’ — ‘ Pardon me, madam, answered he, ‘ I am indeed surprized, but it is through an excess of joy; — could I have ever thought, the favours I have received were bestowed by the amiable Miss Flora Mellafin!’

It is certain, that his astonishment at first was very great; but recovering himself from it in a short time, a thousand passages in Miss Flora’s former behaviour towards him occurred to his remembrance, and made him wonder at himself for not having sooner found her out in the person of his Incognita.—They passed their time, ’till the night was pretty far advanced, in a manner very agreeable to each other, nor parted without reciprocal assurance of renewing this tender intercourse the next day, at the same place.



C H A P. XXII.

Gives an account of a farther, and more laudable motive to induce Mr. Trueworth to put off his intended journey into the country.

THOUGH it is impossible for a man of sense to have any real love for a woman whom he cannot esteem, yet Mr. Trueworth found enough in the agreeable person and sprightly humour of Miss Flora, to dissipate those uneasy reflections, which, in spite of him, had lurked in his mind on Miss Betsy's account: — the amour with this fond girl afforded him a pleasing amusement for a time, and without filling his heart with a new passion, cleared it of those remains of his former one, which he had taken so much pains to extirpate.

Whenever he thought of Miss Betsy, as it was impossible a young lady, he once had loved with so much tenderness, should not sometimes come into his thoughts, it was only with a friendly concern for her imagined fall. — ‘ It is no wonder,’ would he often say to himself, ‘ that so young,
and

‘ and lovely a creature, under the tuition
 ‘ of a woman of Lady Mellafin’s character,
 ‘ and the constant companion of one of
 ‘ Miss Flora’s disposition, endued with
 ‘ charms to excite the warmest wishes,
 ‘ and unprovided with sufficient arms for
 ‘ her defence, should have yielded to the
 ‘ temptations of an unwarrantable flame.’
 In fine he pitied her, but no more.

Thus entirely freed from all prepossession, and his heart almost in the same situation, as before he ever knew what it was to love, he was easily persuaded by his friends to give over all thoughts of going into the country, and stay to partake, in a moderate way, those pleasures of the town, which the many uneasy moments he had sustained, [during his courtship with Miss Betsey, had kept him hitherto from having any relish for.

But this state of indifference lasted not long, — an object presented itself to him, inspiring him with a passion, which had so much of reason for its guide, as made him think it rather his glory, than his misfortune, to be a second time enslaved.

Among all the friends and acquaintance he had in town, there was none he more valued and esteemed, than Sir Bazil Loveit:

Loveit : — they had been for some time inseparable companions ; but accidents, either on the one side or the other, having hindered their meeting for several days, Mr. Truworth went one morning to visit him at his house : — he found him at home, but the hall so incumbered with trunks and boxes, that there scarce a passage to the parlour door. — ‘ Welcome, my dear friend said Sir Basil,’ who, having seen him from a window, ran down stairs to receive him ; ‘ you find me in a strange disorder here, but I have got a couple of women out of the country, and that sex, I think like a general officer, can never move without a wagon load of trumpery at their tail. — ‘ What, married!’ cried Mr. Truworth. — ‘ No faith,’ said the other, ‘ but the arrival of two sisters last night from Staffordshire, gives me a sort of specimen of the hurry I am to expect when I become a husband.

‘ The hurry,’ said Mr. Truworth, ‘ you seem to complain of, must needs be a very agreeable one, and I heartily congratulate you upon it. — A single man, like you, makes but a very solitary figure in a great wild house ; — these ladies will fill the vacuum, and give a double life to your family.’ —
‘ Nay,’

‘ Nay,’ resumed Sir Basil, ‘ I shall not
 ‘ have them long with me, — they hate
 ‘ London, and never come but once in
 ‘ two years, to buy cloaths and see fa-
 ‘ shions ; — besides one of them is mar-
 ‘ ried, and the other so fond of her sister,
 ‘ that I believe she would not quit her to
 ‘ be a dutchess. — Indeed it is not much
 ‘ to be wondered at, our mother dying
 ‘ when she was very young, Harriet, for
 ‘ so she is called, was brought up under
 ‘ her sister, who is eight years older than
 ‘ herself, and they never have been asun-
 ‘ der two days in their lives.

Mr. Trueworth then expatiated on the
 amiableness of such an harmony between
 persons of the same blood: to which Sir
 Basil replied, that it was more than or-
 dinary fortunate for his sisters: — ‘ for,’
 said he, ‘ the elder of them being mar-
 ‘ ried just before my mother’s death, my
 ‘ father committed to her the care of the
 ‘ younger, as she was reckoned a woman
 ‘ of greater prudence than might be ex-
 ‘ pected from her years. — My brother
 ‘ Wellair, for that is the name of the
 ‘ gentleman she married, though a very
 ‘ good husband, in the main, is a great
 ‘ sportsman, takes rather too much de-
 ‘ light in his hawks and hounds, and
 ‘ gives his wife but little of his company
 ‘ in

' in the day, so that if it were not for
 ' Harriot she would pass her time un-
 ' comfortably enough. — In short, the
 ' younger is improved by the lessons of
 ' the elder, and the elder diverted by the
 ' sprightliness and good-humour of the
 ' younger.

Sir Basil, who had an extreme regard
 for his sisters, could not forbear entertain-
 ing Mr. Truworth on this subject all
 the time he was there, and at parting
 told him, he would not ask him to stay
 dinner that day, because he supposed they
 would be very busy in unpacking their
 things, and setting themselves in order,
 but engaged him to come on the follow-
 ing.

Mr. Truworth thought no farther on
 what had passed, than to remember his
 promise, which he accordingly fulfilled.
 — Sir Basil received him with open arms,
 and conducted him into the dining-room,
 where the two ladies were sitting: —
 they were both very handsome; — the
 elder was extremely graceful, and, at first
 glance, appeared to be the most striking
 beauty of the two; but on a second, the
 younger had the advantage: — she was
 not altogether so tall as her sister, nor
 VOL. II. N had

had a skin of that dazzling whiteness, but her shape was exquisite,—her complexion clear,—her eyes sparkling,—all her features perfectly regular, and accompanied with a sweetness, which had in it somewhat irresistably attractive.

After the first compliments were over, neither of them lost, by their manner of conversation, any part of that admiration which their eyes had gained.—Mrs. Wel-lair talked pretty much, yet so agreeably, that nobody could be tired of hearing her:—Miss Harriot spoke much less, but all she said discovered a delicacy of sentiment, and a judgment far above her years.—Sir Basil had a large estate, he lived up to the height of it, had a very elegant taste, and in complaisance to his sisters, as well as to his friend, who had never dined with him before since he set up house-keeping, had taken care that day to omit nothing in his bill of fare, that could excite, or gratify, the most luxurious appetite; yet it was the wit, spirit, and good-humour of the company, especially of Miss Harriot, which, to Mr. Truworth, made the most agreeable part of the entertainment.

When

When the desert was over, and the healths of absent friends toasted in Tokay and Frontinac, they all adjourned into the drawing-room, where coffee and tea were soon after brought in; — Mrs. Wellair having been advised by her physicians to refrain the use of any of those liquors, on account of some disorder she had complained of, took this opportunity of desiring leave to retire, in order to acquaint her husband, it being post-night, with her safe arrival in town.

Agreeable as her conversation was, Mr. Truworth found no miss of her, as the lovely Harriot was left behind: — on the contrary, he was rather rejoiced, in the hope she would now give her tongue a greater latitude than she had done in the presence of one whom he easily perceived, she looked upon as her superior in understanding, as well as years; and to provoke her to it, artfully introduced some discourse on the pleasures of the town, and said to Sir Basil, it seemed to him a kind of miracle, that so young and beautiful a lady as Miss Harriot, could content herself with the obscurity of a country life. —

• Few of her age, indeed, replied Sir
N 2 Basil,

‘Bazil, would choose to live in the manner she does, but though I should, perhaps, not be of the same way of thinking, if I were a woman, and in her place, yet I cannot but say, my reason approves of her conduct in this point.’

‘London, said she, is a very magnificent, opulent city, and those who have their lot cast to live in it, may, doubtless, find sufficient to content them; but as for those amusements, which you gentlemen call the pleasures of the town, and which so many people take every winter such long journies merely to enjoy, I can see nothing in them, which a reasonable person may not very well dispense with the want of.’

‘What think you of the court, madam?’ cried Mr. Trueworth. — ‘As of a place I would always choose to avoid,’ replied she; — ‘I heartily pity the fatigue of those, who are obliged to attend, and am tempted to laugh at the stupidity of those, who undertake it without necessity. — I am amazed to think how any one of common sense can be at so great an expence for rich cloaths, to go to a place where she
‘must

‘ must suffer as great pain in shewing
 ‘ them.—Bless me! to stand for two or
 ‘ three hours together, mute as a fish, —
 ‘ upright as an arrow, and when the scene
 ‘ is over, walk backward like a crab, curt-
 ‘ sying at every step, though their legs are
 ‘ so tired, they are scarce able to go thro’
 ‘ the ceremony.’

‘ A masquerade then, resumed Mr.
 ‘ Trueworth, willing to try her further;
 ‘ what say you, madam, to a masquerade?
 ‘ I hope you will allow no freedom of
 ‘ behaviour is wanting there.’ ——— ‘ I
 ‘ should like a masquerade extremely,
 ‘ answered she, if conducted in the same
 ‘ manner I have been told they are in
 ‘ Italy, and some other places, where
 ‘ only persons of condition are admitted,
 ‘ and none presume to say that under a
 ‘ vizard, which he either would, or ought
 ‘ to be ashamed of, when it is plucked
 ‘ off; — but the venal ones you have
 ‘ here, are my utter detestation; — they
 ‘ seem to me to licence, under a shew of
 ‘ innocent diversion, not only folly, but
 ‘ all kind of prophaneness, and inde-
 ‘ cency.’

‘ It must be owned, madam, said Mr.
 ‘ Trueworth, that your sentiments on
 N 3 ‘ both

' both these subjects are extremely just,
 ' but you can have no such objection
 ' against a play, or opera.' — ' No, fir,
 ' answered she, I look upon a good play
 ' as one of the most improving, as well
 ' as agreeable entertainments, a thinking
 ' mind can take; — and as for an opera,'
 — ' Aye, sister, cried Sir Basil, inter-
 ' rupting her, the opera, — take care
 ' what you say of the opera,—my friend
 ' here is a passionate lover of musick, and
 ' if you utter one syllable against his fa-
 ' vourite science, you will certainly pass
 ' in his opinion for a stoic.' — ' I should
 ' deserve it, said she, and be in reality
 ' as insensible as that sect of philosophers
 ' affect to be, if I were not capable of
 ' being touched by the charms of har-
 ' mony.'

' Then, madam, said Mr. Trueworth,
 ' there are two of the pleasures of Lon-
 ' don, which are so happy to receive
 ' your approbation.' — ' Not only my ap-
 ' probation, replied she, but my applause.
 ' ——— I am, indeed, a very great
 ' admirer of both, yet can find ways to
 ' make myself easy, without being pre-
 ' sent at either, and, at the distance of a
 ' hundred miles, enjoy in theory all the
 ' satis-

‘ satisfaction the representation could afford.’

‘ This is somewhat extraordinary, indeed, madam, cried Mr. Trueworth ; be so good as to let us know by what method.’ — ‘ It is this, sir, answered she ; — as for the plays, — I have a very good collection of the old ones by me, and have all the new ones sent down to me as they come out : — when I was last in London, I was several times at the theatre, — I observed how the actors and actresses varied their voices and gestures, according to the different characters they appeared in on the stage ; — and thus, whilst I am reading any play, am enabled to judge pretty near how it shews in representation. — I have, indeed, somewhat more difficulty in bringing the opera home to me, yet I am so happy, as to be able to procure a shadow of it at least ; — we have two or three gentlemen in the neighbourhood, who play to great perfection on the violin, and several ladies, who have very pretty voices, and some skill in music ; — my sister touches the bass-viol finely, and I play a little on the harpsichord : — we have all our parts, in score before us, which we execute

‘to the best of our power:—it serves;
 ‘however, to divert ourselves, and those
 ‘friends who think it worth their while to
 ‘come to hear us.’

Mr. Truworth cried out, in a kind of rapture, as soon as she had done speaking, —‘ Who would not think himself happy
 ‘to be one of the audience at such a performance?’—He was going on, but Mrs. Wellair returned, on which he directed the compliments he was about to make Miss Harriot, equally to the other; — which she returned with a great deal of politeness.—The conversation afterwards turned on different subjects, and was very entertaining; — some other company coming in, Mr. Truworth would have taken leave, but Sir Basil would not permit him:—he stayed the whole evening, and when he went home, carried such an idea of the lovely Harriot’s perfection, that scarce any consideration would have been powerful enough to have made him quit the town, while she continued in it.



C H A P. XXIII.

Returns to Miss Betsy's adventures, from which the two former were but a digression, though a very necessary one, as will hereafter appear.

IF Miss Betsy had been made acquainted with the manner in which Mr. Trueworth passed his time, and the inducements he had to stay in London, doubtless her vanity would have been highly piqued; but she had not as yet this subject for mortification: on the contrary, she rather imagined he lingered here on her account, — that it repented him of the letter he had sent her, though his spirit was too great to acknowledge it directly, and waited the arrival of her brother Frank, in hopes of engaging him to make his peace.

With these suggestions did she please herself, whenever he came into her mind; but indeed she had but little room for meditation on his account, — not only Mr. Munden plied her close with presents,

—treats,—fine speeches, and all the tokens of impatient love, but she had also another conquest of a more late, and consequently to a young lady of her humour, a more pleasing æra.

She had been one day at her mantua-maker's, to consult on some matters relating to her dress, and was a little surprised to see the woman come the next morning, before she was out of bed, to her lodgings. — ‘ Heyday, Mrs. Modely, cried she, what brings you here thus early ?’ — ‘ Indeed, madam, answered she, I could not well come out — I have eight or nine gowns in the house now, which should all have been finished and sent home to-day : — the ladies will tear me to pieces about them, but I left all my business, and run away to acquaint you with a thing you little dream of. — Ah ! Miss Betsey, such a fine gentleman ! — such a vast estate ! — but ’tis no wonder, continued she, you are so pretty, that you make all the men die for you.’ — ‘ What is it you are talking of ?’ cried Miss Betsey, ‘ prithee dear Modely explain.’ — ‘ Lord ! replied the other, I am so transported, that I know not how to contain myself ; — but I will tell you, — you were
‘ yester-

' yesterday at my house, — Sir Frederick
 ' Fineer, who lodges in my first floor, —
 ' the sweetest and most generous gentle-
 ' man that ever lived, to be sure; — but
 ' that is nothing to the purpose, — he
 ' saw you from his dining-room window,
 ' when you came out of your chair, —
 ' and, would you believe it, was so
 ' struck, that he immediately fell down
 ' in a swoon: — you were but just gone
 ' when his valet de chambre, for he keeps
 ' three servants, two in livery, and one
 ' out, came down to me, and fetched me
 ' to his master, — ' Oh! Mrs. Modely,
 ' said he to me, what angel have you got
 ' below' — Tell me who she is? —
 ' If she is not already married, I will
 ' give my whole estate to obtain her —
 ' I ask not what her fortune is, — if I
 ' could once call that divine creature my
 ' wife she should command all I am
 ' worth.'

' Indeed, madam, continued she, I
 ' was so much amazed, that I had not
 ' the power of speaking; and he, I sup-
 ' pose, interpreting my silence as a re-
 ' fusel of answering his demands, fell
 ' into such distractions, — such ravings,
 ' as frightened me almost out of my wits,
 ' and at last, to quiet him, I told him

‘ —I hope you will forgive me, — your
 ‘ name, and where you lived, and that
 ‘ you were not married: — on this he
 ‘ seemed pretty easy, and I left him: —
 ‘ but about two hours after, he sent for
 ‘ me again,—desired I would go directly
 ‘ to you,—make you a declaration of love
 ‘ in h.s name, and beg you will give him
 ‘ leave to visit you in person.’

‘ Bless me! cried Miss Betsey, can the
 ‘ man neither speak nor write for him-
 ‘ self?’ — ‘ I told him, madam, re-
 ‘ sumed Mrs. Modely, that it would not
 ‘ be well taken from me; — but he was
 ‘ quite mad, would listen to no reason,
 ‘ ’till I bethought myself of a stratagem,
 ‘ which I fancy you will not disap-
 ‘ prove; — I made him believe, that
 ‘ there was no need of my going to
 ‘ you, — that you were to call upon
 ‘ me about a gown this afternoon, —
 ‘ that I would persuade you to stay and
 ‘ drink tea, and he might come into the
 ‘ room, as if by chance, and entertain
 ‘ you with what discourse he thought pro-
 ‘ per. — Now I would fain have you
 ‘ come, pursued she; for if you do but
 ‘ like his person, such an offer is not to
 ‘ be rejected.’

‘ I do not regard this offer,’ said Miss Betsy, ‘ but I do not know but I may ‘ come just to divert myself a little.’ — ‘ That’s a dear good lady, cried the ‘ other. — ‘ About five, I believe, will be ‘ a proper time.’ — ‘ Aye, thereabout,’ replied Miss Betsy; ‘ but, dear Modely, ‘ don’t let him know you have spoke a ‘ word to me concerning him.’ — ‘ No ‘ —no,’ said she, ‘ I shall not tell him I ‘ have seen you.’

During the whole time this woman stayed, which was, indeed, much longer than might have been expected, from a person of that extraordinary business she pretended, nothing was talked on but Sir Frederick Fineer; — she told Miss Betsy, that to her certain knowledge he was of one of the best families in Cornwall; that he had a great estate in possession, and another in reversion; and besides, was the next of kin to a coronet; that he kept company with nothing but lords and dukes, and that they were always courting his company.

Though Miss Betsy affected to treat all she said with indifference, yet she had given an attentive ear to it, and after she
was

was gone, began to rumage over all her ornaments, — tried one, and then another, to see which would become her best, in order to secure a victory, which she imagined would afford so much triumph. — ‘ Whether I marry him or not, said she to herself, ‘ the address of ‘ a man of his rank will make me of ‘ some consideration in the world ; — and ‘ if ever I do become a wife, I should ‘ like to be a woman of quality ; — they ‘ may say what they will, but a title has ‘ prodigious charms in it, — the name of ‘ Fineer also becomes it ;—Lady Fineer’s ‘ servants there ! — Lady Fineer’s coach ‘ to the door, would sound vastly agree- ‘ able at the play or opera.’

She also pleased herself with the thought, that being courted by a person of Sir Frederick’s quality and estate, would immediately put to silence all the reproaches and remonstrances she might otherwise have expected to be persecuted with, by her brother Frank, on Mr. Truworth’s account : — and this imagination was, of itself, sufficient to give her an infinite satisfaction : — in fine, she found so much in this new effect of her charms, to elevate and delight both her vanity and convenience, that she longed with as much
impatience

impatience for a sight of her admirer, as Mrs. Modely had told her he was under, for a second interview with her.

Some part of the tedious moments were, however, taken up, in a manner she was far from expecting:—she was scarce risen from her toilette, when word was brought her that a young lady, who called herself Miss Flora Mellasin, was come to wait upon her. As she had never seen her since her being driven from Mr, Goodman's, the visit a little surprised her, and she would have been glad if common civility had dispensed with her receiving it; for though the pity she then had felt for her misfortunes, had greatly effaced the memory of the injurious treatment she had met with from her, yet she never desired to continue any correspondence with her, after they were once parted: besides, as she had no reason to look upon her coming as any proof of her friendship or good-will, but rather with a design of doing her some private prejudice, she resolved to behave entirely reserved towards her.

Her conjectures were not groundless:—that complications of every worst passion that can fill the human heart, could
not

not be perfectly satisfied, even amidst the most unbounded gratification of her amorous desires, with the man that had excited them : — the dread of losing him embittered all the transports of possession ; she very well knew he had broke off with Miss Betsey, and doubted not but that event had happened through the artifice she had put in practice ; yet as there was a possibility that the adventure of Denham should be unravelled and the innocence of Miss Betsey cleared up, she trembled lest such an eclarcissement should renew all his former tenderness for that once so much loved rival, and herself be reduced to all the horrors of despair and shame. — It was therefore to sound the inclinations of Miss Betsey, that alone brought her thither, in the wicked hope, that if there was the least probability of a reconciliation between them, she might find some opportunity of traversing all the steps that might be taken by either party for that purpose.

But Miss Betsey was too much upon her guard, to give her any room to discover what her sentiments were in that point ; — she received her very coolly, and even on her first entrance told her, that she was obliged to go out that evening : but the

the other taking no notice of the little pleasure Miss Betsy expressed on seeing her, told her, she came out of friendship to visit her; — that she had been told Mr. Truworth and she were entirely parted; — that if she had so great an affection for him, as the world had been pleased to say, she must certainly stand in need of all the consolation could be given her: — ‘but, I hope, my dear,’ said she, ‘you have too much good sense not to despise him now. Nothing is more common than that men should be false. — Remember what the poet says:

“Ingratitude’s the sin, which, first or last,
Taints the whole sex, the catching court
“disease.”

Miss Betsy was so provoked at being talked to in this manner, that she replied, That there was neither falsehood nor ingratitude in the case; — if Mr. Truworth had desisted his visits, it was only because he was convinced she desired not the continuance of them.

’Tis possible these words were more galling to the jealous heart of Miss Flora, than any thing she could have said, though

though she spoke them with no other intent, than to clear herself of the imputation of having been forsaken; — a thing she looked upon as the worst blemish that could be cast upon her reputation. — Miss Flora finding no more was to be got out of her, took her leave for this time, resolving, however, in her own mind, to keep up an acquaintance with her; that seeming to her, the most likely way, both to satisfy her curiosity, and prevent any effort of what the extravagance of her passion made her apprehend.

Miss Betsy did not give herself much trouble in reflecting on what Miss Flora had said, but as soon as her watch reminded her of the appointed hour, she bid her footman fly and get a chair: — on her coming to the house, Mrs. Modely herself opened the door at the first rap, and desired her to walk in. — ‘No, — ‘no,’ said Miss Betsy, still sitting in the chair, ‘I cannot stay, — I only called to tell you, that I will have the silver ‘robings put upon the green night-gown, ‘and will buy a new trimming for the ‘pink.’ — ‘I shall be sure to obey your ‘orders, madam,’ replied the other, ‘but I must intreat you will do me the
‘honour

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‘ honour to come in, and drink a dish of
‘ tea, — the kettle boils, and I have just
‘ now had a present of a cannister of some
‘ of the finest Hyson in the world.’ — ‘ I
‘ must leave you then as soon as I have
‘ tasted it,’ said Miss Betsy, coming out of
‘ the chair, for I have twenty visits to
‘ make this evening.’

She had not been three minutes in the parlour, when the person, for whom all this ceremony was affected, entered the room in somewhat of an abrupt manner, — ‘ I come Mrs. Modely, to complain,’ said he, — ‘ my servants tell me.’ — With these words he stopt short, and fixed his eyes full on Miss Betsy, with a kind of astonishment. — Mrs. Modely pretending to be in a great fright, cried, ‘ For heaven’s sake Sir Frederick, what is the matter? — I hope nothing in my house has given your honour any cause of complaint?’ — ‘ No, no, ’tis over now,’ cried he, ‘ your house is become a temple, and this is the divinity that honours it with her presence; — this Græcian Venus.’ — Miss Betsy was too much accustomed to company to be easily abashed, and answered briskly, ‘ if you mean the compliment to me, Sir, the Græcian Venus’s are all painted fat,
‘ and

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‘and I have no resemblance of that perfection.’ — ‘Only in your face, madam,’ returned he; — ‘such sparkling eyes, — such a complexion, — such a mouth; — in your shape you are a Helen of Troy.’ — ‘That Helen of Troy,’ said Miss Betsey, with an ironical smile, I think was a Græcian Princess, and must also be fat, or she would not have been reputed a beauty there.’

The baronet finding by this, he had been guilty of an absurdity, when he intended a fine speech, thought to salve up the matter by saying, ‘Sure you are Diana then.’ — ‘Worse and worse,’ cried Miss Betsey; — ‘I beseech you, sir, compare me to no such boisterous goddess, that runs up and down, bare footed and bare leg’d, hunting wild boars in the forest!’ — ‘What shall I call you then,’ resumed he; — ‘O! tell me by what name you will be worshipped?’ — ‘The lady’s name, Sir Frederick,’ cried Mrs. Modely hastily, is Miss Betsey ‘Thoughtless.’ — ‘Betsey, said he? — then Betsey let it be. — Betsey shall henceforth become more famous than Cytherea was of old.’

He

He was going on with this fulsome stuff, in which he was often exposed by the ready wit of Miss Betsy, when a maid belonging to the house came in, and told her, that a gentleman in a hackney coach was at the door, and desired to speak with her. — ‘ With me ! ’ — cried she, not able to guess who should have followed her there, ‘ pray call my footman, and bid him ask the person’s name that enquires for me.’ — The maid did as she was ordered, and Miss Betsy’s servant presently after brought her this intelligence, — ‘ Mr. Munden, madam,’ said he, ‘ not finding you at home, has taken the liberty to call on you here, in order to conduct you where you are to pass the evening.’ — He must be a happy man, indeed that dare take such liberties,’ cried Sir Frederick, somewhat fiercely. --- ‘ Many take more than they are allowed to do,’ said Miss Betsy. --- ‘ Go,’ continued she to the fellow, ‘ and tell him, my mind is changed, --- that I cannot leave the company I am with, and will not go.’ --- Mr. Munden having received this message, ordered the coachman to drive away very much dissatisfied, as the reader may easily suppose.

Miss

Miss Betsey, the day before, had agreed to pass this evening with the ladies at St. James's, and some others, to play at commerce, a game then very much in vogue ; — Mr. Munden was to be one of the company, and calling at Miss Betsey's lodgings, in hopes of having some time with her before this meeting, the maid, who had not lived long enough with her mistress to know her humour, presently told him, she was only gone to her mantua-maker's, and gave him directions to the house ; he also thinking it no indecorum to call on her at the house of a woman of that profession, had reason enough to be mortified at the repulse he met with for so doing.

As to Miss Betsey, though she was a little angry at the freedom Mr. Munden had taken, yet she was in reality much more pleased ; — and this for two reasons : — first, because she saw it gave her new lover some jealous apprehensions ; and, secondly, because it furnished her with a plausible pretence for complying with his entreaties to stay ; which, she protested, she would not on any terms have been prevailed upon to do, but to prevent either him or Mrs. Modely, from suspecting

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pecting she would go where Mr. Munden had desired.

Mrs. Modely went out of the room several times, as if called away by some household affairs, that Sir Frederick might have an opportunity of declaring his passion to Miss Betsy, which he did in much the same rodomontade strain with which he had at first accosted her. — A handsome supper was served in, after which, she being about to take her leave, he affected to be in a great fret, that a fine new chariot, which, he said, he had bespoke, was not come home, that he might have seen her safe to her lodgings, with an equipage suitable to her merit, and the admiration he had of it : — he would needs, however, attend her in another chair ; which piece of gallantry, after a few faint refusals, she accepted.

End of the SECOND VOLUME.





